

MISSING IN ACTION: WHERE ARE THE AIR FORCE'S GEOGRAPHIC  
COMBATANT COMMANDERS?

BY

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## APPROVAL

The undersigned certify that this thesis meets master's-level standards of research, argumentation, and expression.

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## DISCLAIMER

The conclusions and opinions expressed in this document are those of the author. They do not reflect the official position of the US Government, Department of Defense, the United States Air Force, or Air University.

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## ABSTRACT

Since 1947, there have been five Air Force officers selected to command a Geographic Combatant Command (GCC). Although arguably overrepresented in Functional Combatant Commands, the dearth of Air Force officers among the GCCs is a troubling phenomenon. By way of comparison, six Marine Corps officers have been selected to lead a GCC since 1986. This thesis examines the duration and significance of the Air Force's problem; the causes internal to the Air Force that influence GCC selection; and the external perceptions of the Air Force through the perspectives of the Army, Navy, Marine Corps, and national leaders.

This study concludes that the Air Force's rhetoric has frequently not matched its reality. In other words, the Air Force often says one thing and does another. This perception is based on a comparison of the Air Force's declared values in documents such as the Airman's Creed with its operative values, such as its infatuation with the doctrinal role of the Joint Force Air Component Commander. These inconsistencies adversely affect external perceptions of the Air Force. The perceptions of sister-service personnel influence, to some degree, the perceptions of national leaders who, ultimately determine who is selected to command the GCCs. Through differences in perspectives of time and space and through historical dealings with Airmen and the Air Force, the sister-services have developed common and service-specific perceptions of the Air Force, some of which are positive and others of which are negative. Similarly, national leaders hold varying perspectives on Airmen based on the Air Force's performance since 1947.

In summation, the Air Force must act directly to effect internal changes that will indirectly reinforce the positive perceptions of external actors in the GCC selection process while mitigating their negative perceptions. Over the long term, such activities should enhance the probability of Airmen being selected for GCC leadership, which will benefit both the Air Force and the nation.

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## Introduction

*If the leader is filled with high ambition and if he pursues his aims with audacity and strength of will, he will reach them in spite of all obstacles.*

Carl von Clausewitz

In today's geostrategic environment, Geographic Combatant Commanders (GCCs) have become even more important to the formulation and implementation of national military strategy than they were when the Goldwater-Nichols Defense Reorganization Act of 1986 gave them prominent influence. The commanders of GCCs have become arguably more significant than the once-coveted service Chiefs of Staff positions. The GCC commander is not only responsible for the employment of combat forces his area of responsibility (AOR), but is also expected to advise the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJCS), Secretary of Defense (SecDef), Department of State (DoS), and President in regional matters across the spectrum of diplomatic, informational, and economic instruments of national power. Furthermore, these roles have been intensified since the terror attacks on the US of 11 September 2001.

During World War II, in operations such as the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the Air Force proved that it was capable of conducting large-scale independent operations that could affect the outcomes of the war. After World War II, the Army Air Forces (AAF) became independent, and Air Force leaders began vying for the nation's highest military positions. The first Airman to take the helm of a GCC was Lauris Norstad in 1956. He became the theater commander-in-chief of European Command (EUCOM) and held that position for seven years. He expertly handled the extremely tense situation between the United States and the Soviet Union over Berlin during 1961 and 1962. Only

four other Airmen have been selected as GCC commanders since that time. The next Airman to lead a GCC was General Joseph Ralston, who became Commander of EUCOM 36 years after Norstad stepped down. General Ralph Eberhart served as Northern Command (NORTHCOM) commander from 2002 to 2004; he was responsible for North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD) and defense support to civil authorities. From 2007 to 2010, General Victor Renuart held the command position for NORTHCOM, where he oversaw a large expansion of defense mission to support to civil authorities. General Douglas Fraser assumed command of Southern Command (SOUTHCOM) in 2009 and has directed the American response to the earthquake in Haiti, ongoing counter drug operations in South America, and other missions directed by the Secretary of Defense and the President.

These five have been the only Airmen selected as GCC commanders. Since 1986, when the title theater commander-in-chief was designated Geographic Combatant Commander by the Goldwater-Nichols Defense Reorganization Act of 1986, the Army has had 21, the Navy 18 and the Marine Corps 6 GCC Commanders.<sup>1</sup> This leads to the question of this thesis: "Why have Air Force generals not been selected as GCC commanders with representation proportional to that of the other services?"

One might legitimately ask why this question is important. There are two reasons. It is important to the nation, and it is important to the Air Force. Since the Goldwater-Nichols Defense Reorganization Act of 1986, the Department of Defense has focused significantly on joint warfare. Part of this focus involved placing all combat forces under the GCC commander for accomplishment of national objectives in a given region. Prior to this development, service Chiefs of Staff had much more influence on the conduct of operations. Goldwater-Nichols also gave the

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<sup>1</sup> Wiley L. Barnes, "A New Vector for Air Force Development of Joint Leaders," (Maxwell AFB: School of Advanced Air and Space Studies, Air University, 2010), 3.

GCC commanders more influence in the decisions for future combat capability needs. Furthermore, since Airmen rarely command the nation's most important military command positions, the air and space perspectives are often omitted from vital debates. An Airman brings to the joint fight a different perspective on how to view the world, how he/she defines strategic problems, and how to solve them. Without a commander's influence on a GCC staff, the staff becomes rooted in the perspectives and processes of other services. The lack of diversity in problem solving styles hampers the development of innovative solutions.<sup>2</sup> With a dearth of Airmen GCC commanders, those with ground or sea-centric perspectives acquire disproportionate influence. If these influences remain constant over many years, the nation, much like the GCC staffs, may become limited to a two-dimensional approach to solving strategic problems. Finally, if GCC commanders are drawn predominantly from only two or three services, qualified candidates become withdrawn from consideration. Thus, the Air Force must develop a larger number of viable candidates for GCC command positions, thereby increasing the pool of qualified officers. With a larger pool, competition will be greater, and the nation will receive better-qualified officers to command a GCCs.

Furthermore, having a representative number of Air Force GCC commanders is important to the maturation of the Air Force as a national defense organization. It would demonstrate that the organization has grown past the desire for independence from the Army won by icons of airpower such as Billy Mitchell, Carl Spaatz, Curtis LeMay, and Hap Arnold. Moreover, the Air Force's influence on national military strategy would expand, Air Force influence over budget priorities

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<sup>2</sup> Edward S. Brewer, Debra Fertig, Laura Lenderman, Brian Smith, "The Case for Service Leadership Diversity in the Geographic Combatant Commands" (Harvard University, 2010), iv.

would become more focused, and Air Force influence over weapon-systems development would leaven land and naval thought.

### **Evidence and Methodology**

The overall design of this thesis proceeds according to a logic of demonstration of facts, a wide-ranging search for the causes of those facts, and a synthetic conclusion.

Chapter One, The Duration and Significance of the Problem, will demonstrate that lack of Air Force leadership in significant joint positions is not new. It will also assess in greater depth why this issue is important to the nation. The research will use data from historical records of theater and geographic combatant commands as well as those of functional commands. This investigation will demonstrate that the Air Force lags in representation at the GCC level of command. The evidence here will build upon the work of HBelote's "Once in a Blue Moon," Colonel Stuart Archer's "The Next Horizon: Air Force Leadership at Geographic Combatant Commands," Wiley Barnes's "A New Vector for Air Force Development of Joint Leaders," and Edward S. Brewer's, et al., "The Case for Service Leadership Diversity in the Geographic Combatant Commands."<sup>3</sup> Evidence will be derived from those scholarly articles as well as service journals such as *Army Magazine* and *Navy Magazine* and books pertinent to the topic.

Chapter Two, Causes Internal to the Air Force, will study causes within the Air Force. It will first examine Air Force institutional identity specifically investigating the characteristics of the Air Force organization, the role of the individual, and the role of the leader. This portion of the study will culminate with a historical analysis of the allure of the role of

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<sup>3</sup> Howard D. Belote, *Once in a Blue Moon : Airmen in Theater Command : Lauris Norstad, Albrecht Kesselring, and Their Relevance to the Twenty-First Century Air Force* (Maxwell AFB, Ala.: Air University Press, 2000). Stuart K. Archer and Air University (U.S.). Air War College., *The Next Horizon : Air Force Leadership of Geographic Combatant Commands* (Maxwell AFB, Ala.: Air War College, 2008). Barnes, "A New Vector for Air Force Development of Joint Leaders." Brewer, "The Case for Service Leadership Diversity in the Geographic Combatant Commands".

the Joint Forces Air Component Commander (JFACC) within the Air Force. The evidence will come from numerous books written on service culture including Carl Builder's *Icarus Syndrome* and *Masks of War*.<sup>4</sup> Further evidence will be derived from joint and air force doctrine, as well as interviews with past and present senior leaders. This chapter will also examine Air Force structure in relation to the structures of the Army and Navy. The focus will be on command opportunities at the various stages of an officer's career. Evidence for this assessment will come from Air Force, Army, and Navy doctrinal positions.

Chapter Three, Causes External to the Air Force, will assess the factors that lie beyond the Air Force's purview. It will examine how time and spatial aspects of airpower influence GCC selection. Then the thesis will examine how sister services, national leaders, and academic professionals view the Air Force. Evidence from articles in sister-service publications, including *Army Magazine* and *Navy Magazine*, will support this research. Also, data will be derived from public interviews from sister service leaders, national leaders, and academic professionals.

Chapter Four, Synthesis, will fuse the analyses from Chapters Two and Three. This chapter will determine how the contribution of internal and external causes influence each other and their mutual and perhaps complementary effects on Air Force representation among GCCs.

Chapter Five, Conclusions, will present the overall findings of the study and outline the implications thereof for decisions about the Air Force's future direction.

The Air Force has always prided itself on its strategic thinking. From Billy Mitchell's exhortation that the Air Force provide the nation's coastal defense, to the Air Corps Tactical School's industrial-web theory

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<sup>4</sup> Carl H. Builder, *The Icarus Syndrome : The Role of Air Power Theory in the Evolution and Fate of the U.S. Air Force* (New Brunswick, N.J., U.S.A.: Transaction Publishers, 1994). Carl H. Builder, *The Masks of War : American Military Styles in Strategy and Analysis*, A Rand Corporation Research Study (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989).

that guided the American portion of the Combined Bomber Offensive, to nuclear deterrence and Strategic Air Command, and, most recently, John Warden's five-ring theory of targeting, Airmen have always looked to broad concepts to solve the nation's problems. Why then have Air Force officers not been afforded the opportunities to command the influential and increasingly important Geographic Combatant Commands? This thesis will answer that question.

## Chapter 1

### The Duration and Significance of the Problem

*Wars may be fought with weapons, but they are won by men.  
It is the spirit of the men who follow and the man who leads  
that gain the victory.*

George S. Patton, Jr.

Lack of Airmen in command of highly influential positions that involve the employment of air, ground, and naval forces to accomplish national objectives is not new. Since the advent of powered flight, those military men and women who chose aerial warfare as a career path have studied land and naval warfare but have rarely been entrusted with the responsibility of commanding such forces. However, Airmen have traditionally been called upon, if not overrepresented, in what are known as Functional Combatant Commands (FCCs). While these functional commands have combatant command authority (COCOM) over all troops within their purviews, FCCs missions are highly specialized and do not influence national strategy as much as the GCCs. Limiting Airmen solely to command of FCCs is a detriment to the nation. The need for life-long strategic thinkers and diversity at the GCC level ensures that when political leadership calls for action, the Joint Forces Commander (JFC) is well versed in what is increasingly integral and vital to US options for resolving international crises: airpower.

#### **A Long History of Exclusion**

The lack of Airmen in joint command positions has characterized the American military establishment since the inception of the

Aeronautical Division under the US Army's Chief Signal Officer in 1907.<sup>5</sup> Initially subordinate to the Signal Corps, Airmen were seen as being merely a handful of men capable of a unique method of gathering intelligence. However, through two world wars, the Cold War, and into the present day, there has been reluctance by senior military and political leaders to place Airmen in charge of crucial offices with substantial authority over surface forces.

During World War I and the following interwar period, Airmen were absent from highly influential positions. One of the most important divisions on the General Staff was the War Plans Division (WPD). The WPD was a special group of staff officers who had the two-fold duty of drawing up strategic plans in time of peace and of going into the field to help carry them out in time of war.<sup>6</sup> The WPD constituted the fifth division of the General Staff in 1921. None of the thirteen Chiefs of the WPD were Airmen.<sup>7</sup> Moreover, an official Army history states, "The existence of WPD blocked Army Air Forces from entering the strategic planning field, while the existence of GHQ [general headquarters] similarly blocked it from operational or tactical planning."<sup>8</sup>

Similarly, during World War II, Airmen were not chosen for command of Joint Task Forces (JTF) when a great demand for air-mindedness at the highest levels of command existed. The best example of this is Army Air Forces General George Kenney who served under General Douglas MacArthur in the Southwest Pacific theater of operations. One could argue that the island-hopping campaign through

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<sup>5</sup> Air Force History and Museums Program (U.S.). and Bernard C. Nalty, *Winged Shield, Winged Sword: A History of the United States Air Force* (Washington, D.C.: Air Force History and Museums Program, 1997), vii.

<sup>6</sup> United States Army, "History of the United States Army," <http://www.history.army.mil/books/wwii/WCP/ChapterII.htm>, (accessed (accessed 28 January 2011), 29.

<sup>7</sup> James E. Hewes, *From Root to McNamara: Army Organization and Administration, 1900-1963* (Washington: Center of Military History U.S. Army : for sale by the Supt. of Docs. U.S. Govt. Print. Off., 1975), 390-91.

<sup>8</sup> United States Army, "History of the United States Army," (accessed 68.



the Southwest Pacific was an air campaign complemented by ground and sea components. The major reason American and Allied forces assaulted each island during the island hopping was to secure an airfield or area to construct an airfield for land-based airpower. With the longer ranges and heavier payloads of land-based aircraft, the Allies could interdict shipping, provide timely close air support to troops in contact with Japanese forces, and screen for enemy vessels and forces. However, due to various reasons, General MacArthur did not form a JTF with Kenney at the helm. Additionally, MacArthur's well-known desire for acclaim for himself ensured no one but MacArthur would command in the Southwest Pacific. Such a desire is shown in the fact that his staff was more of what one historian called an "eighteenth- or nineteenth-century general's household...where its members were expected to hold at least as much loyalty to him as that they gave the service."<sup>9</sup>

A noted exception that tests the rule that Airmen did not command joint combat forces was Army Air Forces General Millard Harmon who served, in today's doctrinal lexicon, as the land component commander under Admiral Halsey.<sup>10</sup> General Harmon, an Army Air Forces officer, was most notably awarded "direct authority over tactical operations on Guadalcanal, which in effect placed Harmon in operational command of the XIV Corps, comprised of elements of the 25th and 43d Divisions."<sup>11</sup> The impressive outcomes of that famous battle and those after spoke well of an Airman's capabilities, but this exception did not provide the impetus to continue the trend of placing Airmen in charge of large, joint operations.

In the Cold War, the newly minted United States Air Force (USAF) produced its first GCC commander, General Lauris Norstad. After his

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<sup>9</sup> Geoffrey Perret, *Old Soldiers Never Die : The Life of Douglas Macarthur*, 1st ed. (New York: Random House, 1996), 212-13.

<sup>10</sup> Thomas A. Hughes, "A General Airman: Millard Harmon and the South Pacific in World War II," *Joint Force Quarterly*, no. 52 (2009): 156.

<sup>11</sup> Hughes, "A General Airman," 156.

exceptional job in command of EUCOM, no other Airmen led a GCC during the Cold War.<sup>12</sup> Although there were many chances and reasons for Airmen to lead GCCs, none is more compelling than the doctrinal shift that occurred in the late 1970's within the Army and that was supported by many in the Air Force. In order to counter the significant conventional power of the Soviet Union in Europe, without nuclear weapons, the United States Army—with substantial assistance from the Air Force's Tactical Air Command (TAC)—developed the AirLand Battle concept.<sup>13</sup> Under this doctrine, Army and Air Force units were seen as equal and interdependent. It stressed the need for air and land elements to fight as a concentrated team to defeat a numerically superior force along a major axis of attack.<sup>14</sup> From 1973 to 1990, the Army and the Air Force formed a solid partnership centered around the Army's ability to execute its AirLand Battle doctrine with Air Force support.<sup>15</sup> Extensive bi-service training, doctrinal publications, and programmatic cooperation reflected the strength of this relationship.<sup>16</sup> Under this design of highly synchronized air and land maneuver combat, an Airman had to understand the overall scheme of maneuver just as much as the Soldier did.<sup>17</sup> Furthermore, AirLand Battle was whole-heartedly embraced by many leaders in Tactical Air Command (TAC) and the USAF who championed the concept.<sup>18</sup> Yet, no Airman commanded at the GCC level at the zenith of AirLand battle doctrine.

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<sup>12</sup> Belote, *Once in a Blue Moon : Airmen in Theater Command : Lauris Norstad, Albrecht Kesselring, and Their Relevance to the Twenty-First Century Air Force*, 1.

<sup>13</sup> Phillip S. Meilinger and Air University (U.S.). School of Advanced Airpower Studies., eds., *The Paths of Heaven : The Evolution of Airpower Theory* (Maxwell AFB, Ala.: Air University Press, 1997), 420.

<sup>14</sup> Air Land Forces Application Agency (ALFA). *Air-Land Battle Primer* (Langley AFB, Va.,: 1978), 2-2.

<sup>15</sup> Meilinger and Air University (U.S.). School of Advanced Airpower Studies., eds., *The Paths of Heaven : The Evolution of Airpower Theory*, 433.

<sup>16</sup> ———, eds., *The Paths of Heaven : The Evolution of Airpower Theory*, 433.

<sup>17</sup> Air Land Forces Application Agency (ALFA). *Air-Land Battle Primer*, 4-8.

<sup>18</sup> ———, *Air-Land Battle Primer*, 2-3.

After the fall of the iron curtain and the demise of the Soviet Union, the United States paradoxically faced a new and challenging world. It was an era that many international relations theorists predicted would usher in a more Kantian world order.<sup>19</sup> In 1993, Charles Kegley implied that the fall of the iron curtain was a “potent catalyst” pushing the world toward idealism.<sup>20</sup> So far, this has not proven to be the case. In this new world order, asymmetric as well as large conventional threats continue to challenge the United States. Still, Airmen have rarely been chosen to command GCCs. The situation has improved somewhat, but only marginally. Since the year 2000, four Airmen have been selected as GCC Commanders. However, during this same period, eight Army, nine Navy and three Marine officers have been appointed. Thus, the trend clearly persists.<sup>21</sup>

### **Airmen Have Been Specializing in Specialization**

Although Airmen are underrepresented at the GCC level, they are overrepresented at the FCC level. Joint Publication 1 states that FCCs “are responsible for a large functional area requiring a single responsibility for the effective coordination of the operations therein.”<sup>22</sup> Additionally, FCCs “support (or can be supported by) GCCs or may conduct missions independently in accordance with the Unified Command Plan [UCP].”<sup>23</sup> Under the current DoD organizational scheme, there are four FCCs: Joint Forces Command (JFCOM), Special Operations Command (SOCOM), Transportation Command (TRANSCOM),

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<sup>19</sup> Charles W. Kegley Jr, "The Neoidealist Moment in International Studies? Realist Myths and the New International Realities," *International Studies Quarterly* 37, no. 2 (1993): 134.

<sup>20</sup> Kegley Jr, "The Neoidealist Moment in International Studies? Realist Myths and the New International Realities," 134.

<sup>21</sup> Brewer, "The Case for Service Leadership Diversity in the Geographic Combatant Commands", 49-52.

<sup>22</sup> Joint Publication 1, "Doctrine for the Armed Forces of the United States," (2009), I-14.

<sup>23</sup> ———, "Doctrine for the Armed Forces of the United States," I-10.

and Strategic Command (STRATCOM).<sup>24</sup> Prior to 2002 a fifth FCC existed, Space Command (SPACECOM).<sup>25</sup> Of these FCCs, Airmen have traditionally commanded TRANSCOM, SPACECOM, and frequently STRATCOM.

Transportation Command is responsible for the global mission of DoD logistics. Since its establishment in 1987, Airmen have been the sole sovereigns of TRANSCOM.<sup>26</sup> Although TRANSCOM's assigned forces operate in an out of combat zones and often come under hostile fire, their actions on the objectives are limited to delivering vital supplies. While those supplies may be critical to the success of an operation, the scheme of maneuver and concept of operations for any regional conflict is developed by the GCC commander and his staff.

From 1985 to 2002, USSPACECOM was another bastion of Airman leadership. SPACECOM was responsible for planning, coordinating, integrating, and providing command and control of DoD space missions in support of national objectives.<sup>27</sup> During its existence, SPACECOM was directed exclusively by Airmen.<sup>28</sup> SPACECOM's mission and responsibilities were transferred to STRATCOM on 1 October 2002.<sup>29</sup>

STRATCOM is responsible for a diverse group of DoD missions. It is the central coordinating agency for US nuclear capabilities, DoD cyber power, DoD space command and control, integrated missile defense, national level intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (ISR),

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<sup>24</sup> Department of Defense, "Unified Command Plan," <http://www.defense.gov/specials/unifiedcommand/>, (accessed 26 January 2011). (accessed 26 January 2011).

<sup>25</sup> ———, "Unified Command Plan," (accessed (accessed 26 January 2011).

<sup>26</sup> United States Transportation Command, "Ustranscom History," <http://www.transcom.mil/about/timeline.cfm>, (accessed 26 January 2011).

<sup>27</sup> United States Strategic Command, "History," <http://www.stratcom.mil/history/>, (accessed 26 January 2011). (accessed 26 January 2011).

<sup>28</sup> Archer and Air University (U.S.). Air War College., *The Next Horizon : Air Force Leadership of Geographic Combatant Commands*, 18.

<sup>29</sup> Department of Defense, "Unified Command Plan," (accessed (accessed 26 January 2011).

information operations, and counter-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.<sup>30</sup> Since its inception, two of STRATCOM's five commanders have been Airmen.<sup>31</sup>

The detrimental effect of this tendency is that Airmen have become known as technical experts who are fully capable of handling very specific missions of national importance, but who are less capable of dealing with the wide range of problems a GCC faces on a daily basis.

### **Airpower is Too Important for This to Continue**

In coordination with Department of State representatives, the GCC commanders are responsible for developing and implementing of US national policy in their respective regions. Therefore, who commands the GCCs is crucial to national security. Donald Rumsfeld once said, "We looked across the board for the best qualified individual and the best fit for that command."<sup>32</sup> This should always be the case. However, the US national leadership should consider Airmen more frequently than they have for the simple reason that diversity breeds excellence. Furthermore, Airmen are taught to think strategically from a junior rank; and airpower is increasingly integral and vital to the majority of modern military operations.

First, the GCCs should have service variation in the leadership to foster a diversified culture within their respective staff structures. One of the key findings from a Harvard Kennedy School of Government study was "organizations that incorporate diverse leadership perspectives into the main work of the group enhance the quality of the work by rethinking primary tasks, missions, and strategies."<sup>33</sup> This means that when the

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<sup>30</sup> United States Strategic Command, "History," (accessed 9accessed 26 January 2011).

<sup>31</sup> Archer and Air University (U.S.). Air War College., *The Next Horizon : Air Force Leadership of Geographic Combatant Commands*, 18.

<sup>32</sup> ———, *The Next Horizon : Air Force Leadership of Geographic Combatant Commands*, 17.

<sup>33</sup> Brewer, "The Case for Service Leadership Diversity in the Geographic Combatant Commands", 46.

leaders have differing perspectives, over time, organizations embrace a varied way of thinking and solving problems. In addition, the study concluded that by *not* varying the service origin of leaders of GCCs, the DoD “risks stifling innovation and limiting the full exploration of ideas.”<sup>34</sup> The need to remove single service perspectives within GCC staffs is certainly necessary in today’s environment in which the GCC has attained such prominence.

Second, Airmen are taught to think strategically from a young age. For example, at Squadron Officer School (SOS), the Air Force’s professional military education (PME) course for captains, the curriculum discusses strategic considerations and implications for company grade officers and newly promoted field grade officers.<sup>35</sup> The curriculum stresses the importance for young officers to understand their role in the broader context of today’s dynamic security environment.<sup>36</sup> In comparison, the Marine Corps PME course for captains specifically states that their outcome is to prepare officers for tactical-level operations.<sup>37</sup> Similarly, the Army’s Captain’s Career Course for Field Artillery and Armor officers state that their mission is to prepare officers for no higher than brigade-level work.<sup>38</sup>

Third, airpower is increasingly integral and vital for military options when politicians want to apply a military solution to an

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<sup>34</sup> ———, “The Case for Service Leadership Diversity in the Geographic Combatant Commands”, 46.

<sup>35</sup> Squadron Officer School, “Squadron Officer School Residence Course Catalog,” (2010): 24.

<sup>36</sup> ———, “Squadron Officer School Residence Course Catalog,” 24.

<sup>37</sup> Marine Corps University, “Expeditionary Warfare School,” Marine Corps Combat Development Command, <http://www.mcu.usmc.mil/EWS%20Documents/CommandBriefAug2010.pdf>, (accessed 9 Feb 11 2011).

<sup>38</sup> 428th Field Artillery Brigade, “Field Artillery Captain's Career Course,” Training and Doctrine Command, <http://sill-www.army.mil/428thfa/faccc.htm>, (accessed 9 Feb 11 2011), 316th Cavalry Brigade, “Maneuver Captain's Career Course,” Training and Doctrine Command, <http://www.knox.army.mil/school/16cav/mccc1.asp>, (accessed 9 Feb 2011).

international situation. One of the earliest examples of this was the United Kingdom's (UK) use of airpower to police the Imperial lands of Mesopotamia in the 1920's.<sup>39</sup> The UK used four squadrons to control the tribal populations of modern day Iraq with some success.<sup>40</sup>

The first use of USAF aircraft to resolve a strategically consequential situation was the epic Berlin Airlift in 1948-49. General Lucius D. Clay, the American Governor of Germany, decided to use aircraft to supply Berlin to avoid confrontation with the Soviet Union's military. Airpower delivered 1.78 million tons of supplies on 189,963 flights saving the population of Berlin.<sup>41</sup> More importantly, it helped resolve a significant dispute between the US and USSR without nuclear war.

In 1986, responding to the terrorist bombing of a discotheque in West Berlin, President Ronald Reagan launched USAF and Navy aircraft against Libya to punish Col Muammar Qaddafi for this act and his continued support for terrorism.<sup>42</sup> President Reagan sought to ensure that the military strike minimized American losses and Libyan civilian casualties, a constraint that would become more and more consistent in future US military operations.<sup>43</sup>

After Iraq conquered Kuwait in August of 1990, airpower was the first US military force to arrive in the theater of operations. Five days after the Iraqi invasion, twenty-four USAF F-15C Eagles from the First Fighter Wing arrived at Dhahran Air Base, Saudi Arabia, and were flying

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<sup>39</sup> James S. Corum and Wray R. Johnson, *Airpower in Small Wars : Fighting Insurgents and Terrorists*, Modern War Studies (Lawrence, Kan.: University Press of Kansas, 2003), 56.

<sup>40</sup> Corum and Johnson, *Airpower in Small Wars : Fighting Insurgents and Terrorists*, 61.

<sup>41</sup> Roger G. Miller, *To Save a City : The Berlin Airlift, 1948-1949* (College Station, TX: Texas A&M University Press, 2000), 201.

<sup>42</sup> Joseph T. Stanik, *El Dorado Canyon : Reagan's Undeclared War with Qaddafi* (Annapolis, Md.: Naval Institute Press, 2003), 146.

<sup>43</sup> Stanik, *El Dorado Canyon : Reagan's Undeclared War with Qaddafi*, 147.

combat air patrols the next day.<sup>44</sup> In addition to the USAF aircraft, two carriers were enroute, but they were hundreds of miles away from targets.<sup>45</sup> The 2<sup>nd</sup> Brigade of the 82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne Division arrived soon after but was lightly armed and short of anti-tank and artillery ammunition.<sup>46</sup> Then, on January 16, 1991, the USAF began a three-week air campaign that destroyed many of the Iraqi defenses, interdicted the supply lines of Iraqi fielded forces, and pummeled those forces as well. So complete was the devastation that US and coalition ground forces needed only 100 hours to neutralize what was then the fourth-largest Army in the world. Following Desert Storm, Operations Northern and Southern Watch enforced no-fly zones over Iraq to protect Kurd and Shi'ite populations from further Ba'athist oppressions. Parts of these operations were Desert Fox and Provide Comfort, in which airpower punished Saddam Hussein and aided Kurds in Northern Iraq. Later in the 1990's, Operations Deliberate Force in Bosnia and Allied Force in Kosovo USAF aircraft, once again, led the charge to coerce belligerents to change their behavior with success on both occasions.

After the 11 September 2001 surprise attack on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon by Al Qaeda operatives, America's first military requirement was to secure the skies. The USAF Airborne Warning and Control System (AWACS) aircraft, the E-3 Sentry, plus F-16 and F-15 fighters, gave the military the ability to do so. Airpower was then called upon to attack this new enemy of the US. Operation Enduring Freedom's initial concept of operations was based on small units of Special Operations Forces (SOF) with friendly local ground forces and

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<sup>44</sup> Michael R. Gordon and Bernard E. Trainor, *The Generals' War : The inside Story of the Conflict in the Gulf*, 1st ed. (Boston: Little Brown, 1995), 55.

<sup>45</sup> Gordon and Trainor, *The Generals' War : The inside Story of the Conflict in the Gulf*, 55.

<sup>46</sup> ———, *The Generals' War : The inside Story of the Conflict in the Gulf*, 55.



American airpower.<sup>47</sup> This Afghanistan model was very effective in removing the Taliban from power and forcing the Taliban and Al Qaeda into the hinterlands of Afghanistan and Pakistan.

More recently, airpower has been vital in response to international humanitarian crises. In 2004, in the wake of the horrific tsunami that killed over 200,000 people in the Indian Ocean, USAF aircraft constituted the initial American response.<sup>48</sup> By the end of Operation Unified Assistance, USAF aircraft had delivered over 700,000 pounds of humanitarian relief, saving a countless number of lives.<sup>49</sup> Similarly, after the 12 January 2009 earthquake in Haiti, USAF Airmen were again the first to respond with humanitarian aid to begin recovery efforts in that often-troubled land.<sup>50</sup> Indeed, as we trace Airpower's history toward present day, political leaders have frequently chosen to employ airpower as a vital and integral part of any American response to crises.

Most recently, airpower has shown to be integral in counter-insurgency operations. Airpower is accomplishing a host of missions vital for success. Counterinsurgency is a civilian populace or ground-centric type of warfare. Many believe that, as such, airpower has little to provide other than the occasional bomb on an insurgent stronghold. However, airpower vitally enables ground operations even in a ground-centric campaign. Airlift assets deliver vital supplies and medical aid to areas that otherwise would have very limited resources. Airpower provides armed over-watch of ground forces, giving the ground commander the ability to look around corners and even city blocks. It also provides the concurrent ability to strike targets with the same

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<sup>47</sup> Craig Wills Richard Andres, Thomas Griffith, "Winning with Allies: The Strategic Value of the Afghan Model," *International Security* 30, no. 3 (2006).

<sup>48</sup> Colonel David Mobley, *Special Operations Forces Tsunami Relief Operations 28 Dec 04-18 Jan 05*.

<sup>49</sup> Mobley, *Sof Tsunami Relief Operations*.

<sup>50</sup> Air Force News Service, "Special Operations C-130s, Airmen Provide Disaster Relief in Haiti," (2009), <http://www.af.mil/news/story.asp?id=123185581>, (accessed 27 March 2011). (accessed 26 January 2011).

platform that provides the airborne eyes. Signals intelligence aircraft allow friendly forces to monitor enemy communications, while electronic attack aircraft disrupt improvised explosive device detonation sequences and jam enemy communications. Truly, in counterinsurgency, the flexibility and range of airpower gives the joint forces commander options that would otherwise be unavailable.

The scarcity of Airmen in influential positions such as the War Plans Division, which has been followed by only rare appearances of Airmen as theater CINCs and later GCC commanders, demonstrates that there is nothing new about Airmen being underrepresented from key command positions of national importance. Although well represented in FCCs, Airmen are notably underrepresented in GCCs. This subject is important for the nation because the US cannot afford to lose its edge in any military endeavor. The GCC staff must be innovative. By repeatedly assigning surface-oriented services to GCCs, long-established problem-solving methods and missions become routine and traditional. A diverse set of GCC commanders would instill fresh ideas and ways to solve problems that can benefit the nation. As experience demonstrates, airpower has been vital and integral when national leaders desired to punish an adversary with bombs on target or bring much-needed aid to solve an international crisis. Thus, it is imperative that the leaders of GCCs have intimate knowledge of airpower's inherent capabilities and its limitations. In short, the nation needs more Airmen in GCC positions.

## Chapter 2

### Causes Internal to the Air Force

*The US Air Force provides the Nation a unique capability to project national influence anywhere in the world on very short notice. Air and space forces, through their inherent speed, range, and flexibility, can respond to national requirements by delivering precise military power to create effects where and when needed.*

Air Force Doctrine Document 1

This chapter presents an introspective examination of Air Force culture and structure to determine which traits aid, and which traits restrain Air Force officers from attaining GCC command. The first section examines the Air Force institutional identity. It delves into the Air Force's declared and operative values, the concept of air-mindedness, the roles of the individual and the leader, and the allure of the Joint Forces Air Component Commander (JFACC). The final section, a comparison of command structures among the Army, Navy, and Air Force, will highlight the differences in how each service grooms its commanders.

#### **The Air Force's Institutional Identity**

When surveying an institution's identity, one should inspect what the organization proclaims as its "way of doing things" and contrast that with how the organization actually operates. The core values, Airman's Creed, and foundational doctrine illustrate the Air Force's declared sense of identity. The operative values are more nuanced and not as well defined, but are nonetheless observable. The interaction of the declarative and operative values with the notion of air-mindedness defines the roles of individuals and guides leaders' actions. This interaction was most evident over the past 60 years in the Air Force's desire to have the JFACC incorporated into formal doctrine. Since

attaining independence from the Army in 1947, the Air Force has maintained and bolstered its organizational culture to ensure it remained fundamentally distinct from the other services.

### **The Air Force's Declared Values**

On 1 January 1997, the Air Force published "The Little Blue Book," which established the Air Force core values of *Integrity first*, *Service before self*, and *Excellence in all we do*. That book states that these core values are for all members of the Air Force family and for "all of us to read, to understand, to live by and to cherish."<sup>1</sup> This simple set of rules outlines the expectations of all Air Force personnel. *Integrity first*, simply stated, is the ability to do what is right even when no one is looking.<sup>2</sup> Members of the Air Force are expected to have and demonstrate integrity. Although this may seem trivial and obvious, in practice, exhibiting integrity first can often cause conflicts between doing the right thing and getting the mission done, whether it is filling out a form correctly or operating by restrictive rules of engagement.<sup>3</sup> *Service before self* asserts that professional duty takes priority over personal desires.<sup>4</sup> This core value is explained as the need to follow rules, demonstrate respect for others, and exercise discipline and self-control.<sup>5</sup> It not only reinforces the primacy of duty, it also directs Airmen to consider all their actions, and how those actions affect the Air Force and the nation. *Excellence in all we do* pertains to the individual and the organization. On the individual level, each member is expected to strive to do well in all endeavors. From professional military education and budgeting resources, to flying an aircraft or maintaining a radio set, each Airman is bound to strive for the highest achievable levels of

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<sup>1</sup> Department of the Air Force, "The Little Blue Book," (1997), 1.

<sup>2</sup> ———, "The Little Blue Book," 3.

<sup>3</sup> Jeffrey York, "Why We Lie: Air Force Core Values Vs. Air Force Culture" (Air University, 2007), 8.

<sup>4</sup> Department of the Air Force, "The Little Blue Book," 4.

<sup>5</sup> ———, "The Little Blue Book," 4.

performance. Organizationally, Airmen must put forth their best effort to coordinate and execute missions. When national security is at risk, no other option is available.

These core values were developed for four reasons. First, anyone wishing to become a member of the Air Force must exhibit these traits.<sup>6</sup> Therefore, the organization should improve with each new recruit. Next, the values point to unchanging characteristics of the profession of arms.<sup>7</sup> The values also help Air Force leadership determine the ethical climate of the organization and guide the organization in times of trouble.<sup>8</sup>

Other declared values of the Air Force are found in the Airman's Creed (Appendix 1). Air Force Chief of Staff General T. Michael Moseley published the creed on 25 April 2007. In an attempt to refocus the Air Force on its global mission of protecting the nation's interests, General Moseley pointed out that the Air Force is not merely a service of various technical specialists, but a service of warriors dedicated to "flying, fighting, and winning."<sup>9</sup> The creed also reminded Airmen of the initiative, innovation, and forward thinking of America's early airpower advocates and charged the new generation to continue in the footsteps of previous generations.<sup>10</sup> This creed drew upon two ideas: focusing the force and highlighting examples of decorated Airmen to advance the notion that Airmen are warriors.

Air Force Doctrine Document 1 (AFDD-1) offers further insight into the Air Force's declared values. These concepts, like the core values and the Airman's creed, are instilled as the basic tenets of the Air Force. They offer a construct that makes the Air Force distinct from the other

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<sup>6</sup> ———, "The Little Blue Book," 7.

<sup>7</sup> ———, "The Little Blue Book," 8.

<sup>8</sup> ———, "The Little Blue Book," 8.

<sup>9</sup> T. Michael Moseley, "CsaF Presents Airman's Creed," (2007), <http://www.seymourjohnson.af.mil/news/story.asp?id=123050352>, (accessed 18 March 2010). (accessed 18 March 2011).

<sup>10</sup> Moseley, "CsaF Presents Airman's Creed," (accessed 18 March 2011).

services. The foundational doctrinal statements show what Airmen believe and how they plan to employ airpower. The following statements exemplify the uniqueness of the Air Force.

- The US Air Force provides the Nation a unique capability to project national influence anywhere in the world on very short notice. Air and space forces, through their inherent speed, range, and flexibility, can respond to national requirements by delivering precise military power to create effects where and when needed.
- The “American way of war” has long been described as warfare based on either a strategy of annihilation or of attrition and focused on engaging the enemy in close combat to achieve a decisive battle. Air and space power, if properly focused, offer our national leadership alternatives to the annihilation and attrition options.
- Air and space forces can pursue tactical, operational, or strategic objectives, in any combination, or all three simultaneously.
- Air and space power is inherently a strategic force and an offensive weapon.
- Unlike other forms of military power, air and space power may simultaneously hold all of an enemy’s instruments of power at risk—military, economic, and political.
- The axiom that “airmen work for airmen, and the senior airman works for the joint force commander (JFC)” not only preserves the principle of unity of command, it also embodies the principle of simplicity.<sup>11</sup>

From this list, one can begin to see the fundamental distinction between the Air Force’s identity and that of the other services. These statements demonstrate that Airmen believe they can go anywhere in the world at anytime to accomplish any mission. Furthermore, Airmen feel that the Air Force executes its missions quickly and globally and can do so with greater lethality and precision than the other services. Airmen also believe that operations can be executed over numerous domains and levels of war. However, the last item in the list implies that the JFC is

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<sup>11</sup> Air Force Doctrine Document 1, *Air Force Basic Doctrine* (17 November 2003), ix-x.

*not* an Airman. Thus, in its efforts to champion a single senior Airman in a joint task force, the Air Force has implicitly denied Airmen an even playing field when competing for GCC command.

The core values, the Airman's Creed, and foundational doctrinal statements reveal the Air Force's declared values. The core values lay the base for how an Airman should approach behavior and reasoning. They serve as both moral and practical guides to conduct. The Airman's Creed serves as a reaffirmation that Airmen are innovative and unique warriors with a storied past. It charges them to continue in the footsteps of airpower pioneers. The foundational doctrine statements convey that the Air Force is distinct from the other services, vital to successful outcomes in warfare, offensive in nature, and best employed when centrally controlled by an Airman. The Air Force is expected to perform global missions with a high degree of skill and professionalism. Additionally, the foundational doctrine reminds Airmen that their job is that of a warrior and each skill set is important in the application of military force for national security objectives.

### **The Air Force's Operative Values**

The operative values of the Air Force are not as evident as the declared values, but they can be inferred from budgeting decisions and leadership assignments. Budgeting decisions such as priority being given to the F-22, F-35, and space programs point to a love of technology. Additionally, the great majority of senior Air Force leaders have been pilots, indicating the primacy of the pilot as the icon of Air Force self-identity.

Since its initial flight over the dunes of Kitty Hawk in 1903, the airplane has been renowned as a significant technological accomplishment. The time, effort, and innovation required to understand, design, build, and fly an airplane is significant. Early aviation pioneers were fascinated with this new technology, and today's aviators are as well. Indeed, Carl Builder notes, "The Air Force could be

said to worship at the altar of technology. The airplane from its inception has been an expression of the miracle of technology.”<sup>12</sup> The Air Force’s love of technology is not limited to airplanes. The Air Force is the executive agent for DoD space programs and recently made an effort to become the DoD’s leader in cyber by creating the 24th Air Force, whose mission is cyber warfare.<sup>13</sup>

This infatuation with technology impels the Air Force to attract and recruit people with high levels of education and technical aptitude. In the 2008 Air Force Posture statement, then Air Force Chief of Staff, General T. Michael Moseley stated, “the nature of our Air Force mission demands a highly educated, trained, and experienced force.”<sup>14</sup> Just over 77 percent of newly enlisted recruits in the Air Force are considered high quality compared to the 58.5 percent of other services.<sup>15</sup> Having a well-educated and technically adept work force reinforces the Air Force’s view of itself as an elite, technologically capable service.

Within this group, pilots get particular priority. Furthermore, as Builder points out, many pilots associate themselves with their aircraft more than they do with the Air Force as an institution.<sup>16</sup> Pilots are also likely see themselves as pilots even more than they do as Air Force officers.<sup>17</sup> The division in the Air Force between pilots and the rest of the force is particularly noteworthy. Pilots have traditionally held the highest

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<sup>12</sup> Builder, *The Masks of War : American Military Styles in Strategy and Analysis*, 19.

<sup>13</sup> Michael B. Donley, "The Dod Executive Agent for Space Perspective" (paper presented at the Global Warfare Symposium, Los Angeles, CA, 2010), 5. Carla Pampe, "Air Force Activates Cyber Numbered Air Force," *Air Force Space Command News* (2009), <http://www.afspc.af.mil/news/story.asp?id=123163863>, (accessed 21 Mar 2011).

<sup>14</sup> Michael Wynne and T. Michael Moseley, "Air Force Posture Statement 2008," (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Air Force: 2008), 19.

<sup>15</sup> High quality is defined as an AFQT score in the 50<sup>th</sup> percentile or higher and a high school diploma. Personnel and Readiness Office of The Undersecretary of Defense, "Population Representation of the Military Service, Fiscal Year 2008 Report," (Washington, D.C.: Department of Defense, 2008), 11-12.

<sup>16</sup> Builder, *The Masks of War : American Military Styles in Strategy and Analysis*, 23.

<sup>17</sup> ———, *The Masks of War : American Military Styles in Strategy and Analysis*, 26.



positions of leadership, even though they make up less than 20 percent of the officer ranks and only 4 percent of the active duty force.<sup>18</sup> Iconic images of past Air Force heroes are typically of a pilot next to his aircraft (Figure 1). Rarely do intelligence, maintenance, space, or missile officers become well known, even though their contributions to the Air Force and nation are just as important as a fighter, bomber, or transport pilot's.



Figure 1. Eddie Rickenbacker, Chuck Yeager, Robin Olds  
*Source: Air Force Historical Research Agency*

Another cultural factor in the Air Force is the shift toward an expeditionary warrior mentality, which is a direct result of continuous combat operations since Operation Desert Storm in 1990-1991. In the aftermath of that war, the Air Force enforced daily no-fly zones over northern and southern Iraq, and intermixed with combat operations in other locations such as Bosnia and Kosovo. Since 2001, the Air Force has been continuously engaged in Afghanistan; and since 2003, it has been simultaneously engaged in Iraq. Prior to Desert Storm, the Air Force was focused on how to defeat the Soviet Union in Europe working closely with the Army and NATO, while maintaining two-thirds of the nation's nuclear alert forces.

The operative values of technological worship, the primacy of the pilot, and an expeditionary warrior mentality interact, but not always congruently. For example, many pilots exhibit a distinct lack of enthusiasm when they are assigned to operate Remotely Piloted Aircraft

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<sup>18</sup> Thomas P. Ehrhard, "An Air Force Strategy for the Long Haul," (Washington, D.C.: Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments, 2009), 11.

(RPA).<sup>19</sup> Even though these aircraft are technologically advanced systems, highly educated, technology-loving pilots dread being “stuck” flying a RPA. Conversely, pilots welcome the F-22, arguably the most sophisticated aircraft in the world, and flying it is a much sought-after assignment.

The Air Force’s declared values are expressed in its core values, the Airman’s Creed, and foundational doctrine statements. The Air Force’s operative values are technological worship, primacy of the pilot, and an expeditionary warrior mindset. As a general rule, one should probably conclude that its declared values represents those by which it seeks to live, while its operative values represent those by which it actually lives.

### **Air-mindedness**

Air-mindedness is a concept that members of the Air Force are taught and are expected to have as individuals. According to Dr. Dale Hayden, air-mindedness, in its simplest form is, “how Airmen view the battlespace.”<sup>20</sup> However, this basic statement does not explain the nuances that make Airman’s view different from a Soldier, Sailor, or a Marine. These nuances are best explained by discussing how Airmen view time and space.

The role of time and space, in defining the attributes of air-mindedness, has two components worthy of discussion: history and amount of time to traverse a given distance. With respect to the passage of time, the use of land warfare, the natural choice for land-based humans, far exceeds the existence of both naval and air warfare. Eventually, man realized the need to venture to the sea for sustenance and economic development, thus necessitating naval warfare. For thousands of years, man has developed, practiced, theorized over, and

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<sup>19</sup> Houston R. Cantwell and Air University (U.S.). School of Advanced Air and Space Studies., *Beyond Butterflies : Predator and the Evolution of Unmanned Aerial Vehicles in Air Force Culture* (Maxwell AFB, Ala.: School of Advanced Air and Space Studies, 2007), 80-87.

<sup>20</sup> Dale L. Hayden, "Air-Mindedness," *Air & Space Power Journal* 22, no. 4 (2008): 44.

executed land and naval warfare. In stark contrast, one of the earliest concepts of aerial warfare was introduced in 1883, one year before the first dirigible was flown, with Albert Robida's *War in the Twentieth Century*.<sup>21</sup> It would be another twenty years before the Wright brothers' historic flight at Kitty Hawk, North Carolina in December 1903. Man's application of war through and from the air is therefore just over 100 years old. In this framework, airpower theory and application is still in its infancy with most theories being based, if only loosely, on Giulio Douhet's *Command of the Air*. Based on this discrepancy, in general, Soldiers, Sailors, and Marines have a more deeply ingrained historical consciousness than do Airmen. They tend to be aware of longer historical cycles than are Airmen, and the other services tend to be more secure in their institutional identity than the Air Force.

The ability of aircraft to traverse significant distances at speeds unmatched by land or naval forces is the second aspect that influences air-mindedness. Speed is an essential airpower capability that makes it distinct from land and naval warfare. An infantryman may walk twelve miles on a forced march in one day, a ship can travel ten times that distance in the same amount of time, but an aircraft can travel ten times the distance of the ship in less time. This speed is matched with a significant lack of restraint by geographic or spatial features that dominate land warfare and restrict naval warfare.

Surface features do not constrain Airmen to the degree they constrain Soldiers, Sailors, and Marines. Therefore, Airmen arguably have a more comprehensive view of the overall situation than personnel of surface forces. As Philip Meilinger stated, "The Air Force maintains that an aircraft's ability to strike anywhere within a theater means that air leaders must think in a similarly broad vein. On the other hand, ground commanders' concerns have traditionally been with the area to

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<sup>21</sup> John Olsen, ed., *A History of Air Warfare* (Washington D.C.: Potomac Books, Inc., 2010), 3.

their front, stretching out to perhaps 30 miles. Although concerned about activities beyond that, their interest is not as immediate.”<sup>22</sup> Naval commanders, like Airmen, do view the world globally, but with the restriction of their limited combat reach into the littoral areas of the great landmasses.

A related spatial difference is how Airmen perceive a line on a map. To many Airmen, a line on a map means nothing more than a change of frequency to talk to the next sector’s traffic control station. To the land warrior, the line represents the boundaries of his assigned area of operations within which the commander is responsible for all activities. This is similar to a feudal fiefdom carved out for military operations. For a naval captain, the lines are latitude and longitude for which he can plot his course to the next port of call, rendezvous point, or engagement area. Lines on a map exemplify the mental constraints operating domains place on service members in a particular branch of the military.

In the late-1930s through World War II, it was important to cultivate air-mindedness because air-mindedness is essential to realizing the potential of the air medium in warfare and the need to distinguish the Air Force from the other services. Indeed, the Air Force gained independence in part due to convincing national leaders that airpower possessed unique capabilities. However, the longer the Air Force promoted itself as being unique, the harder it became for the Air Force to cooperate with other services. It may be argued that the Air Force championed the uniqueness of airpower cause for too long, and that such advocacy eventually proved counterproductive, if the goal was and is to operate within and as a part of joint forces.

### **The Role of the Individual**

Airmen are expected to be highly skilled and competent in their assigned fields. Pilots, mechanics, missileers, and civil engineers should

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<sup>22</sup> Phillip S. Meilinger, "Air-Ground Cooperation Perspectives," *Military Review* 83, no. 6 (2003): 51.

be able to execute their missions with technical proficiency. This is an outgrowth of the core value of excellence in all we do and the operative value of technical proficiency. Airmen are also expected to deploy to an overseas theater against active opponents. With a significant Air Force presence in the Middle East since 1990, many Airmen have had multiple opportunities to deploy. Deployment experience is so important that many assignments for officers in deployed positions, such as Provincial Reconstruction Team Chief and expeditionary group and wing commands, are now considered equivalent to squadron, group, or wing commands. This deployment expectation is derived from all three declared values and the operative value of the expeditionary warrior ethos.

### **The Role of the Leader**

Former Air Force Chief of Staff General John Jumper stated, “The expeditionary Air Force requires leaders who can take war fighting to the highest possible level of success in support of our national security objectives.”<sup>23</sup> The role of leaders in the Air Force is “to motivate and direct people to carry out the unit’s mission successfully.”<sup>24</sup> Both formal and informal leaders exist at all levels in the Air Force. Air Force doctrine recognizes this fact when it states, “The vast majority of Air Force leaders are not commanders.”<sup>25</sup> Therefore, people of all ranks and positions within the Air Force are expected to show attributes of leadership at some point during their careers. Leaders set the example for others to follow, and one way the Air Force expects leaders to do this is by living the core values.<sup>26</sup> Using the declared and operative values, together with the guidelines set forth by Air Force leadership doctrine, one can determine what characteristics an Air Force leader should possess. That

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<sup>23</sup> Air Force Doctrine Document 1-1, *Leadership and Force Development* (18 February 2006), iii.

<sup>24</sup> ———, *Leadership and Force Development*, 1.

<sup>25</sup> ———, *Leadership and Force Development*, 1.

<sup>26</sup> ———, *Leadership and Force Development*, 3.

person must live by the core values, have a high level of technical skill, have a warrior ethos, and lead both in and out of command.

Air Force doctrine considers leadership at the strategic, operational, and tactical levels. At the strategic level, it is also known as institutional leadership.<sup>27</sup> Senior leaders should have “technical competence on force structure and integration; on unified, joint, multinational, and interagency operations; on resource allocation; and on management of complex systems. They should also possess conceptual competence in creating policy, vision, and interpersonal skills emphasizing consensus building and influencing peers and other policy makers—both internal and external to the organization. *This level is the nexus of warfighting leadership skills for the Air Force*” (emphasis added).<sup>28</sup> Air Force senior leader training should “enable [leaders] to align their organization to serve the personnel, the Air Force, and the nation, and shape the way air and space forces are employed.”<sup>29</sup> Indeed, Air Force senior leaders see themselves as suppliers of sorties, in contrast to their Army and Navy counterparts who view themselves as combat commanders.<sup>30</sup> This focus on sortie rate is a product of many factors including a desire to utilize air assets efficiently, a realization of the role of flexibility in air warfare, and an intense dedication to mission accomplishment.

At the operational or team leadership level, Airmen are expected to develop skills necessary to establish effective command climates that will lead their team toward achievement of a common goal.<sup>31</sup> At the tactical or personal level of leadership, Airmen must focus primarily on interpersonal skills and technical skills needed to accomplish the

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<sup>27</sup> ———, *Leadership and Force Development*, 10.

<sup>28</sup> ———, *Leadership and Force Development*, 10.

<sup>29</sup> ———, *Leadership and Force Development*, 35.

<sup>30</sup> Builder, *The Icarus Syndrome : The Role of Air Power Theory in the Evolution and Fate of the U.S. Air Force*, 7.

<sup>31</sup> Air Force Doctrine Document 1-1, *Leadership and Force Development*, 10.

assigned mission.<sup>32</sup> These levels of leadership build upon each other in increasing responsibility and scope. Air Force leaders must live the core values, exhibit technical skill, have good interpersonal abilities, and show potential to accept more responsibility.

Leaders are expected to cultivate a warrior ethos within themselves, then within their units. The tactical and operational level leadership attributes build upon one another, culminating in the strategic or institutional leadership level. This level is where Air Force officers exhibit the ability to direct groups of units and is considered the pinnacle of leadership development. Finally, from doctrinal statements, this is where the senior leader directs the use of air and space forces in pursuit of national objectives, which is exemplified by the JFACC.

### **The Allure of the JFACC**

Since first taking aircraft to war, Airmen have believed that the perspective given from the sky and the distinctive character of aerial warfare meant that Airmen and *Airmen alone* should command air formations.<sup>33</sup> However, many land and sea commanders saw airplanes merely as observation platforms and aerial artillery with which to support their ground or sea operations.<sup>34</sup> During the interwar period, airpower theory and capabilities grew substantially. The conduct of World War II gave Airmen the opportunity to demonstrate the utility of airpower theory and employ new technologies. However, application of airpower in the beginning of World War II was not in accordance with Airmen's wishes. During the planning and the initial phases of the invasion of Northern Africa, airpower was divided among various land

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<sup>32</sup> ———, *Leadership and Force Development*, 9.

<sup>33</sup> William Mitchell, *Winged Defense : The Development and Possibilities of Modern Air Power--Economic and Military* (Tuscaloosa, AL: University of Alabama Press, 2009), 159-61.

<sup>34</sup> Thomas H. Greer, *The Development of Air Doctrine in the Army Air Arm, 1917-1941* (Maxwell AFB, AL: Air University, 1953), 5-12.

commanders to support their schemes of maneuver.<sup>35</sup> This limited resource of airpower could not be used flexibly, and ground commanders were hesitant to release their assigned aircraft to neighboring ground commanders who were in more need of airpower.<sup>36</sup> This practice became known as “penny packeting” airpower and caused serious problems for American forces during the invasion of Northern Africa. Major General Lloyd R. Fredenall, commander of the US II Corps, denied the use of American aircraft to support the French, who were under heavy attacks, due to his desire to ensure air cover for his own 509th Infantry Regiment, even though it was not actively engaged in combat.<sup>37</sup> This and other examples were frustrating to air commanders. For example, Brigadier General James “Jimmy” Doolittle, 12th Air Force Commander, supported ordering a general halt to Allied forces to prepare defensive positions. During this halt, the 12th Air Force continued the offensive from the air, leaving ground troops the task of conducting mopping-up operations.<sup>38</sup>

After the North African experience, Army senior leaders, including General Dwight D. Eisenhower, understood the need to control airpower assets centrally to ensure maximum concentration in the most important locations.<sup>39</sup> From this realization, Field Manual 100-20 was published, which declared that air and ground forces are “co-equal and interdependent” and that the JFC would not attach air units under the command of ground commanders unless urgent conditions demanded

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<sup>35</sup> Daniel R. Mortensen, *A Pattern for Joint Operations : World War II Close Air Support, North Africa* (Washington, D.C.: Office of Air Force History and U.S. Army Center of Military History, 1987), 50, 53.

<sup>36</sup> Rebecca Grant, "Penny Packets, Then and Now," *Air Force Magazine*, June 2010, 57.

<sup>37</sup> B. Franklin Cooling and United States. Air Force. Office of Air Force History., *Case Studies in the Development of Close Air Support* (Washington, DC: Office of Air Force History U.S. Air Force : For sale by the Supt. of Docs. U.S. G.P.O., 1990), 167.

<sup>38</sup> Cooling and United States. Air Force. Office of Air Force History., *Case Studies in the Development of Close Air Support*, 167.

<sup>39</sup> Mortensen, *A Pattern for Joint Operations : World War II Close Air Support, North Africa*, 83.



it.<sup>40</sup> This document angered many ground force proponents and North African field commanders.<sup>41</sup> Thus, the struggle was not over for centrally controlled airpower, even after the Air Force gained independence in 1947.

The allure of the JFACC since World War II can be divided into two periods, 1947-1991, and 1991-present. The first period encompasses the fight for establishment of the JFACC position, while the latter was characterized by the employment of the JFACC position in multiple operations.

From 1947-1991, the nation's and the Air Force's most extensive wars were in Korea and Vietnam. Airpower in Korea made significant contributions to the accomplishment of American objectives. One postwar assessment found that the majority of communist losses came from United Nations air attack: 47% of troops killed, 75% of tanks destroyed, 81% of trucks lost, and 72% of artillery destroyed.<sup>42</sup> However, airpower was not at the outset under the command of a single Airman, which often frustrated Airmen and complicated air operations and effectiveness. Additionally, the Army, Navy, and Marines did not accept the Air Force's position that all airpower assets should be centrally controlled. However, eventually, the control of airpower in Korea was centralized under an Air Force officer.<sup>43</sup> Nevertheless, the other services objected to this concept and were determined that it would not occur in Vietnam.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> United States Army, *Field Manual 100-20 Command and Employment of Airpower* (Washington D.C.: War Department, 21 July 1943), 1-2.

<sup>41</sup> Mortensen, *A Pattern for Joint Operations : World War II Close Air Support, North Africa*, 79.

<sup>42</sup> Richard P. Hallion, "Air Power in Peripheral Conflict: The Cases of Korea and Vietnam," Air Force Historical Studies Office, <http://www.airforcehistory.hq.af.mil/EARS/Hallionpapers/airpowerinperip.htm>, (accessed 16 March 2011).

<sup>43</sup> Ian Horwood, *Interservice Rivalry and Airpower in the Vietnam War* (Fort Leavenworth, Kan.: Combat Studies Institute Press, 2006), 11.

<sup>44</sup> Horwood, *Interservice Rivalry and Airpower in the Vietnam War*, 11.

Vietnam air operations were divided into several sectors, which were controlled by various authorities. North Vietnam airspace was under command of Commander-in-Chief Pacific Command (CINCPAC) through the Navy's Task force 77 and the Air Force's 7th Air Force. South Vietnam-based airpower was under the command of Military Assistance Command Vietnam (MACV). However, Strategic Air Command, headquartered at Offutt AFB, Nebraska, controlled B-52 missions operating over Vietnam.<sup>45</sup> All Air Force assets operating from Thailand were under the command of the 7th Air Force, rather than the MACV Air Component Commander.<sup>46</sup> In addition to the convoluted command structures, the Army began developing organic CAS assets due to the Air Force's neglect of that role.<sup>47</sup> The Air Force parried that blow with a counter-accusation that the Army's direct support airlift assets were an assault on the tenet of centralized control.<sup>48</sup> The result was a compromise, by which the Air Force acquiesced in Army development of rotary-wing aviation and the Army recognized Air Force primacy over fixed-wing aviation.<sup>49</sup> In an attempt to skirt the compromise, the Air Force tried to institute a Tactical Air Controls System (TACS) under the Air Forces Component Commander, but the Army and Navy retained command of their own aircraft.<sup>50</sup> Thus, the Air Force won a watered-down version of the JFACC in Vietnam, under whose terms where the primary air assets the Air Component Commander commanded were those of the Air Force.

In the post-Vietnam era, the Air Force continued to fight for the

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<sup>45</sup> ———, *Interservice Rivalry and Airpower in the Vietnam War*, 74.

<sup>46</sup> ———, *Interservice Rivalry and Airpower in the Vietnam War*, 73.

<sup>47</sup> J. A. Stockfish, United States. Army., and Rand Corporation., *The 1962 Howze Board and Army Combat Developments* (Santa Monica, Calif.: Rand, 1994), 21-23.

<sup>48</sup> Stockfish, United States. Army., and Rand Corporation., *The 1962 Howze Board and Army Combat Developments*, 25.

<sup>49</sup> Ray L. Bowers, *Tactical Airlift* (Washington, D.C.: Office of Air Force History U.S. Air Force : For sale by the Supt. of Docs. U.S. G.P.O., 1983), 238.

<sup>50</sup> Horwood, *Interservice Rivalry and Airpower in the Vietnam War*, 79.

legitimacy of a JFACC. The battle was won with the introduction into joint doctrine outlining the need for a JFACC.<sup>51</sup> The role was further solidified with Joint Chiefs of Staff Publication 26, *Joint Doctrine for Theater Counterair Operations (for Overseas Land Areas)*. In this document, the role of the JFACC was further defined and authorized for GCCs to employ.<sup>52</sup> However, the Navy and Marines remained concerned that the Air Force would be able to control their air assets. The Marines were particularly worried. Under the terms of the 1986 Omnibus Agreement, the MAGTF would retain operational control of Marine Aviation units, while giving excess sorties to the JFACC. However, if the JFC determined the MAGTF assets were needed for higher priority missions, he retained the power to direct them.<sup>53</sup>

Five years later, General Charles Horner became the first formal JFACC, serving under General H. Norman Schwarzkopf, the CENTCOM commander during Operation Desert Storm. After over 60 years of insistence that airpower should be centrally controlled by an Airman, the Air Force won the battle and proved the concept in combat by almost single-handedly winning Desert Storm. At least, that was the Air Force's version of the story.<sup>54</sup> To the Army, Desert Storm was viewed as a glory grab by the Air Force. The daily, high-profile videos of precision bombing, coupled with images of destroyed Iraqi vehicles along the infamous highway of death, only served to feed the Army's discontent. The Army also viewed Desert Storm as operating under a doctrinal technicality, which increased tensions between the JFACC and the corps

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<sup>51</sup> Stephen J. McNamara, *Airpower's Gordian Knot: Centralized Versus Organic Control* (Maxwell AFB, AL: Air University Press, 1994), ix.

<sup>52</sup> Joint Chiefs of Staff Publication 26, "Joint Doctrine for Theater Counterair Operations (from Overseas Land Areas)," ed. Department of Defense (1 April 1986), III-4.

<sup>53</sup> Robert M. Bray Richard C. Murrow and Air University (U.S.). Air War College., *Marine Tacair and the 1986 Omnibus Agreement* (Maxwell AFB, Ala.: 1990), 1-2.

<sup>54</sup> Richard Hallion, *Storm over Iraq : Air Power and the Gulf War*, Smithsonian History of Aviation Series (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1992), 251-54.

commanders.<sup>55</sup> This tension was the result of a NATO agreement that stemmed from the development of AirLand Battle doctrine. Under the NATO version of this doctrine, air units provided Offensive Air Support to the ground commanders, which consisted of CAS and Battlefield Air Interdiction (BAI).<sup>56</sup> BAI was different from traditional air interdiction (AI) in that it allowed the ground commander to request air and to attack in the immediate rear of the front line but beyond the range of CAS procedures.<sup>57</sup> Desert Storm however, was not a NATO operation; therefore, NATO doctrine did not apply. This circumstance was convenient for General Horner because it freed him to focus on strategic attacks aimed at decapitation of the Iraqi regime and set priorities for AI under general guidance from the CENTCOM commander. This exploitation of a doctrinal technicality was particularly irksome to the VII Corps commander, Lieutenant General Fredrick Franks, who deployed his corps from Europe to Saudi Arabia. He expected the Air Force to follow NATO AirLand Battle Doctrine.<sup>58</sup> Though the Army's and Air Force's interpretations on the utility of the JFACC concept in Desert Storm were significantly different, after the war the JFACC was solidly ingrained in American military doctrine. Air Force officers, it seemed, had climbed to new heights with the JFACC, but had also built a glass ceiling above that position which appeared ever more reserved for a ground or naval officer.

Between 1991 and 2001, the JFACC concept proved invaluable in

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<sup>55</sup> Jr. Donald Purdy, "Compromise Is Not a Dirty Word: Structuring a Functional Agreement in Air-Ground Operations" (Air University, 2009), 33.

<sup>56</sup> Dr. Harold Winton, "An Ambivalent Partnership: US Army and Air Force Perspectives on Air-Ground Operations, 1973-90," in *The Paths of Heaven: The Evolution of Airpower Theory*, ed. Philip S. Meilinger and Air University (U.S.), School of Advanced Air and Space Studies (Maxwell AFB, Ala., Air University Press, 1997), 423.

<sup>57</sup> Richard G. Davis and United States. Air Force. Office of Air Force History., *The 31 Initiatives : A Study in Air Force - Army Cooperation* (Washington, D.C.: Office of Air Force History, 1987), 30-31.

<sup>58</sup> Thomas A. Keaney et al., *Gulf War Air Power Survey*, VI vols., vol. I (Washington, D.C.: Dept. of the Air Force : For sale by the U.S. G.P.O. Supt. of Docs., 1993), 314.

both Bosnia and Kosovo. Since 2001, with the involvement of American forces in two simultaneous counterinsurgencies, the role of the JFACC has once again become contentious.

The CENTCOM JFACC supervised the execution of Operations Northern and Southern Watch from 1991 until their termination in 2003. Those combat operations seasoned and honed the Air Force's ability to command theater air operations. Additional regional conflicts further enhanced the concept and role of the JFACC. Operation Deliberate Force over Bosnia in the mid-1990s showcased airpower's capacity to reach national objectives. Operation Allied Force occurred shortly thereafter over Kosovo, and is arguably the closest any air campaign since the Battle of Britain has come to ending a conflict primarily by airpower. Some, however, claim that the real reason for the end of hostilities was the threat of invading ground troops.<sup>59</sup> Nevertheless, these two air campaigns further embedded the concept of the JFACC, with some Army, Navy, and Marine aviation restrictions, into Air Force and joint doctrine.

The early stage of Operation Enduring Freedom was also a proving ground for the JFACC. During this time, small teams of special operations forces allied with indigenous Afghan militias were supported by massive amounts of airpower in the struggle to topple the Taliban and al Qaeda in Afghanistan. Some military thinkers even began to brand this as a new way of war for Americans.<sup>60</sup>

The JFACC construct became less useful after the "shock and awe" of the 2003 Iraq invasion turned into an insurgency and Afghanistan saw a resurgence of the Taliban in Afghanistan. The JFACC was faced with the dilemma of how, from a central location, to command airpower assets for two separate sub-theaters of war, both of which fell within the same

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<sup>59</sup> Timothy R. Reese, "Precision Firepower: Smart Bombs, Dumb Strategy," *Military Review* 83, no. 4 (2003): 50.

<sup>60</sup> Stephen D. Biddle and Army War College (U.S.). Strategic Studies Institute., *Afghanistan and the Future of Warfare : Implications for Army and Defense Policy* (Carlisle Barracks, PA: Strategic Studies Institute U.S. Army War College, 2002), iv.

GCC's area of responsibility. This led to the establishment of a joint air component coordination element (JACCE) below the level of the JFACC, which performs many of the duties of the JFACC, yet without the official title of commander.<sup>61</sup> Air Force doctrine states that the JACCE is "a liaison element, not a [command and control] node; thus the [J]ACCE *normally* has no authority to direct or employ forces."<sup>62</sup> (emphasis added)

The crusade for official doctrine stating the need for airpower to be centrally controlled under a JFACC was hard fought and eventually won. Now, the Air Force is holding closely to its concept and the position upon which the doctrinal tenet of centralized command is centered.

### **The Air Force's Structure**

The Air Force command structure differs significantly from those of the Army and Navy. The structure of the Army and Navy may prepare a leader better for GCC command than does the Air Force's structure.

Army officers learn command at an early rank. The first legal command position in the Army is that of company commander.<sup>63</sup> Company command in the Army is at the O-3, or captain level. Company commanders are in charge of the training, health, and employment of 80-120 soldiers. The next level is battalion, which normally consists of four companies. The officer in command of a battalion is typically a lieutenant colonel. After battalion command comes brigade command at the rank of colonel, which has four-to-five battalions. The division level is commanded by a major general, and then corps level which is commanded by a lieutenant general. Finally, Army commanders, four-star generals, are the operational-level commanders who usually have two or more corps in their commands. From here, Army four-star

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<sup>61</sup> Joint Publication 3-30, "Command and Control for Joint Air Operations," (12 January 2010), H-1.

<sup>62</sup> United States. Dept. of the Air Force., *Operations and Organization* (Washington, D.C.: Dept. of the Air Force, 2007), 71.

<sup>63</sup> United States. Army., *Organization of the United States Army* (Washington, D.C.,: 1994), 53-61.

generals are available to command numerous Army major commands and joint commands.<sup>64</sup>

The command structure of the Army compels junior officers to assume the responsibilities of command. At nearly every rank after major, in all specialties, Army officers have the opportunity to command. This building-block approach aids in the gradual development of leaders to assume more responsibility and progressively understand larger areas of action. Not only does this allow Army commanders to build experience gradually, it also ensures the commander has a manageable workload at each level. Once a company commander has mastered his job, he can manage and employ four companies and so forth up the chain of command.

The Navy also offers legal command for surface warfare officers, at the O-3 level, lieutenant, although an officer must be more senior than that before he assumes command of a large ship. In contrast, naval aviators do not earn a command until reaching the rank of O-5, commander. The larger the ship or unit, the higher the rank required to command it. Similarly, when an officer has progressed significantly, he is allowed to command multiple ships or units culminating in a fleet command. After a fleet command, the Navy considers an officer ready to venture into the joint command arena.

The Air Force is different from both services. In the Air Force, an officer does not attain command until O-4 for non-flying units and O-5 for flying, space and missile squadrons. A key difference here is that an Air Force squadron is normally about the same size as an Army company and has half the crew complement of an Arleigh Burke class destroyer.<sup>65</sup> Therefore, Air Force officers are responsible for fewer people but typically

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<sup>64</sup> The Marine Corps mirrors the Army with slight variations.

<sup>65</sup> United States Navy, "USS Arleigh Burke," United States Navy, <http://www.arleighburke.navy.mil/site%20pages/char.aspx>, (accessed 30 March 2011).

more valuable equipment than the Army, while their commands are comparable with the Navy depending on weapon system. Similarly to the other services, after O-4/5, Air Force officers have command opportunities at every rank level through four-star general, at which point they are eligible for joint command positions. There is one key difference between the Air Force commanders and those of the other services: when employed in combat, the only commander making decisions on airpower employment is the JFACC. In the Army and Navy, the company commander or ship captain is making such decisions. Air Force officers manage their units during combat operations, but they do not direct combat operations. This results in significant drawbacks in Air Force leadership development because the pressure and burden of command during wartime is removed from individual commanders due to the Air Force's desire for centralized control and the technical feasibility of the air tasking order.

By allowing officers to develop their leadership styles and capabilities through formal command at a young age, the other services ensure officers experience more tangible leadership experiences than does the Air Force. They develop many of the skills the Air Force reserves for the operational, or team-building, level of command. Additionally, the other services decentralize control much more than the Air Force does, which allows these young leaders to make employment decisions with infantrymen or vessels. In contrast, the JFACC is the first opportunity an Air Force commander has to make decisions about airpower employment.

### **Summary**

By examining the Air Force's values, air-mindedness, roles, attraction to the JFACC, and structure, one can determine that certain characteristics favor attainment of GCC command and other attributes hinder it. The general focus of the declared values of the Air Force is that Airmen are moral individuals who conduct a unique method of warfare.



The operative values indicate that the Air Force is more concerned with technical skill and systems. The effect of this infatuation with technology is that outsiders often form the opinion that Airmen are excellent specialists but poor generalists; this may explain why Airmen are overrepresented in FCCs. Air-mindedness is both an advantage and a disadvantage in qualifying for GCC command. On the one hand, it produces strategic thinking early in an Air Force officer's career. On the other hand, if advocated with too much force and shrillness, it can induce narrow thinking among Airmen and distrust among other warriors. The long battle to attain centralized command for airpower in a theater of operations demonstrates the Air Force's resolve to gain and maintain influence over air operations, yet the failure to convince other services to allow the JFACC to direct their resources demonstrates lack of trust among the services. Finally, Air Force command structure does not facilitate command in war until the rank of lieutenant general. Thus, one can conclude that the Air Force is at least partially to blame for the lack of Air Force representation at GCC commands. In the quest for establishment of the JFACC, the Air Force fixed its focus—the highest representation of Air Force attainment—on air command, and not command.

### Chapter 3

#### Causes External to the Air Force

*Then, of course, 30,000 feet above them, an Air Force pilot flips aside his ponytail – I’m sorry...I know they haven’t had ponytails in a year or two –and looks down at them...“Boy,” he radios his wingman, “it must be tough down there.”*

General David Petraeus

Applause and laughter followed this punch line by the then CENTCOM Commander, General David Petraeus.<sup>66</sup> Petraeus was speaking at the annual Marine Corps Association Foundation dinner on 30 July 2009. In an attempt to reduce backlash, he immediately added, “all joking aside.”<sup>67</sup> However, he later made a public apology to the Air Force, stating, “The farther you make it up the flagpole, the more opportunities you have to show your backside.”<sup>68</sup> Many Air Force supporters, however, did not believe that his apology was sincere.<sup>69</sup> Whatever one takes from the general’s remark, it does highlight the reality that people outside the Air Force look upon it differently than those within it.

This chapter examines and determines the external causes that influence the unequal representation of Air Force officers among

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<sup>66</sup> Mark Thompson, "Petraeus Zinger Wounds Air Force Egos," *Time* (2009), <http://www.time.com/time/nation/article/0,8599,1917841,00.html>, (accessed 21 March 2011).

<sup>67</sup> Thompson, "Petraeus Zinger Wounds Air Force Egos," (accessed 21 March 2011).

<sup>68</sup> Air Force Times Staff Report, "An Open Apology from General Petraeus," *Air Force Times* (3 September 2009), [http://www.airforcetimes.com/news/2009/09/airforce\\_letter\\_petraeus\\_090309w/](http://www.airforcetimes.com/news/2009/09/airforce_letter_petraeus_090309w/), (accessed 21 March 2011).

<sup>69</sup> Air Force Association, "Beyond Outrageous," *AirForce-Magazine.com* (2009), <http://www.airforce-magazine.com/Features/airpower/Pages/box082009petraeus.aspx>, (accessed 27 March 2011).

Geographic Combatant Commanders. It explains how time and space is viewed by the other services. It also assesses how each of the sister services views the Air Force by examining commonly held beliefs and views. Finally, it examines how national leaders perceive the Air Force.

### **Time and Space**

As noted in Chapter Two, how a service views time and space affects how its members view others and the world. Each service has a slightly different perception of history, the time required to cover a given distance, and spatial constructs of geography and cartography. Additionally, the nature of the battlespace conjures up different images for each service, creating different approaches to the conduct of war.

### **Army Perspectives**

The Army views history with confidence and zeal. Not only is land power the oldest form of warfare, it is the primary vehicle through which America won its independence. Many national heroes and presidents served gallantly in the Army, including George Washington, Andrew Jackson, and Dwight Eisenhower. Additionally, the Army played starring roles in epic events such as the attack on Trenton, New Jersey, in which Washington crossed the Delaware River, and, perhaps most famously, the D-Day invasion of Normandy in 1944, an assault commanded by Eisenhower. This heritage has helped embed the Army deeply into American culture and politics.

Like the Air Force, the Army is concerned with the amount of time it takes to traverse a given distance; however, land warriors do not universally consider speed an inherent trait, merely a constraint. The movement of troop and armor formations is important. The Army is also focused on the time their logistics packages take to support combat operations and how combat actions are synchronized in time and

space.<sup>70</sup> Modern, highly mobile mechanized forms of warfare cause extended logistics lines that take time to catch up and resupply the combat forces. Furthermore, Army actions are frequently driven by events rather than by driven by speed. This is based on the reality that land war is often sequential. From this view, Army members have less need for precise timeliness, because moving and distributing massive amounts of food, fuel, and ammunition takes time, more so with increased distances, and follow-on operations must be delayed until their precursors are accomplished.

Geography is one of the most constraining factors a soldier must consider. Not only does the soldier see the limits of his assigned area of operations (AO) outlined on a map, but he also has to study the elevation contours, population centers, lines of communication and water features that will further constrain land actions. Part of this ground study is the identification of key terrain within an AO. Key terrain is defined as, “any locality or area the seizure or retention of which affords a marked advantage to either combatant.”<sup>71</sup> Key terrain has been central to land warfare for over 2500 years. As Sun Tzu noted, “Ground equally advantageous for the enemy or me to occupy is key ground.”<sup>72</sup> For the land warrior, terrain is one of the constants that influence everything he does.

### **Navy Perspectives**

The Navy also exhibits a deeply ingrained sense of history. Established by the second Continental Congress on 13 October 1775, Navy is the oldest official arm of the U.S. armed forces. The Navy particularly loves tradition, a trait that was carried over from the Royal

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<sup>70</sup> United States. Dept. of the Army., *Army Planning and Orders Production* (Washington, D.C.: Dept. of the Army, 2010), 1-3.

<sup>71</sup> ———, *Operational Terms and Graphics* (Washington, D.C.: Headquarters Dept. of the Army, 2004), 1-108.

<sup>72</sup> Sunzi and Samuel B. Griffith, *The Illustrated Art of War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 207.

Navy. In fact, Builder noted, “the Navy worships at the altar of tradition.”<sup>73</sup> This love for tradition put the Navy at odds with the Army Air Forces for primacy of defending the homeland after World War I. Although not the outright victor in the battle for funding and coastal defense during the interwar periods, the Navy did enter World War II with a sizeable fleet. Modern carriers, cruisers, destroyers and other warships were instrumental in the defeat of Imperial Japan and sustainment of the war effort in Great Britain and Europe.

The Navy’s concept of time to travel a distance is similar to the Air Force’s; however, it is less constrained because the Navy can refuel and rearm ships, submarines, and aircraft while underway. Rapid transit, while important, does not mean a ship must get to the forward naval base or sink. The Navy does not view speed as an inherent capability as the Air Force does, but relative speed is important to project effective power on a global scale.

Naval personnel view the world in a holistic sense. This view is similar to the Air Force’s, but with significant differences. The Navy views a world with the global common of the seas where commerce and military action take place.<sup>74</sup> Conversely, the Air Force sees this common as a constraint due to its lack of airfields, but also sees it as a target rich environment where concealment for surface forces is difficult. From the global common, Navy personnel envision access points for refueling and refitting ships as well as launching littoral operations. The Navy sees the nation “connected to the rest of the world by all its oceans [and] in a situation where its maritime communications do in fact have great influence on the national conduct and the national policy.”<sup>75</sup> The Navy’s

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<sup>73</sup> Builder, *The Masks of War : American Military Styles in Strategy and Analysis*, 18.

<sup>74</sup> A. T. Mahan and John B. Hattendorf, *Mahan on Naval Strategy : Selections from the Writings of Rear Admiral Alfred Thayer Mahan*, Classics of Sea Power (Annapolis, Md.: Naval Institute Press, 1991), 25.

<sup>75</sup> J. C. Wylie, *Military Strategy : A General Theory of Power Control*, Classics of Sea Power (Annapolis, Md.: Naval Institute Press, 1989), 154.

job is to defend the United States against attack from the sea and maintain worldwide communications through the use of the seas. Failure to do this means failure for allies and our Army and Air Force deployed forces.<sup>76</sup>

### **Marine Corps Perspectives**

The Marine Corps, established on 10 November 1775 by the Second Continental Congress, routinely touts its establishment with galas.<sup>77</sup> The Marine Corps, like the Army, has had iconic battles that are seared into the American psyche, to include Belleau Wood and Iwo Jima. However, the Marines, like the Air Force, have a history of fighting for their existence. As such, they are constantly cognizant of the need to defend the requirement for a Marine Corps when Congressional purse strings tighten.<sup>78</sup>

The Marine Corps views the time to travel a given distance as a mortal danger. In an opposed amphibious landing, getting combat power on the shore quickly and efficiently is the key to success.<sup>79</sup> Therefore, the Marines have a vested interest in ensuring speed and agility in their operations. Part of the result for this need for speed is the replacement of heavy organic artillery with airpower. The Marines also have to travel rapidly to get to shore and begin operations. Therefore, the Landing Craft Air Cushioned (LCAC) and MV-22 Osprey have been developed for use in these situations.<sup>80</sup>

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<sup>76</sup> Wylie, *Military Strategy : A General Theory of Power Control*, 157.

<sup>77</sup> J. Robert Moskin, *The U.S. Marine Corps Story*, 3rd rev. ed. (Boston: Little Brown & Co., 1992), 25.

<sup>78</sup> Allan Reed Millett, *Semper Fidelis : The History of the United States Marine Corps*, Rev. and expanded ed., The Macmillan Wars of the United States (New York: Maxwell Macmillan International, 1991), 36, 70, 279, 325.

<sup>79</sup> Moskin, *The U.S. Marine Corps Story*, 221-27.

<sup>80</sup> United States Navy, "United States Navy Fact File - Landing Craft, Air Cushioned (Lcac)," United States Navy, [http://www.navy.mil/navydata/fact\\_display.asp?cid=4200&tid=1500&ct=4](http://www.navy.mil/navydata/fact_display.asp?cid=4200&tid=1500&ct=4), (accessed 6 March 2011), United States Navy, "United States Navy Fact File - Mv-22 Osprey," United States Navy,

The Marine Corps view of geography is a mixture of land and sea power outlooks. As mariners, they view the world globally with multiple access points to land their forces. As ground warriors, they seek out the key terrain, lines of communication, and cultural features to shape their plan of action. And, as Airmen, they share some of the perspective of Air Force officers, although they differ from their air brethren in important airpower concepts. This hybrid view yields a unique perspective among Marines. However, they are bound by cultural constraints of naval and sea power in their views of the globe.

### **The Nature of the Battle Space**

Battlespace characteristics immediately conjure up powerful thoughts of strengths and weaknesses, victories and defeats, for each service due to the peculiarities of operating in, on, and through that environment. The nature of the battlespace also affects how each service views application of combat power. In relatively flat, open terrain, Airmen see a battle space where airfields are relatively easy to construct and protect, and targets are relatively easy to locate and destroy due to reduced ground clutter. Land commanders envision a war of armor and mechanized forces moving rapidly to out-maneuver opposing forces in order to destroy or compel the enemy to capitulate. Naval commanders view combat in this type of terrain as littoral operations, as long as it is within the reach of naval gunfire or naval aviation. Examples of this type of terrain are Western and Southern Iraq. Another type of battle space is mountainous jungle that covers many Pacific islands and equatorial lands. Airmen had difficulty closing the Ho Chi Minh trail during the Vietnam War due to lack of visibility through thick jungle canopy. Land commanders in Vietnam led patrols that walked within feet of enemy machine guns before being ambushed; afterwards, the adversary would seemingly melt away into the foliage. Naval commanders reminisce of

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[http://www.navy.mil/navydata/fact\\_display.asp?cid=1200&tid=800&ct=1](http://www.navy.mil/navydata/fact_display.asp?cid=1200&tid=800&ct=1),  
(accessed 6 April 2011).

the Central Pacific push led by Admiral Chester Nimitz and the iconic battles fought near Midway and at Leyte Gulf to secure the victory over Japan.

The length of time a type of warfare has existed, the amount of time it takes an infantryman, ship, or aircraft to transit a given distance, and the differing perspectives forced by each domain, shape the employment of combat power and thus their respective theories of application. They constrain each individual service member to a certain type of worldview that is not easily broken, especially after twenty or thirty years of experience in the employment of an armor brigade, a fighter wing, or a guided missile destroyer. The views of time and space particular to each service are what Thomas Kuhn called a paradigm. According to Kuhn, a paradigm is an accepted group of principles, theory, instrumentation, and application of a given field.<sup>81</sup> Furthermore, for a person to become accepted and to excel, he must learn and practice the fundamentals laid out by the paradigms for whichever field he chooses.<sup>82</sup> Military services have paradigms that govern their way of thinking and applying military force. The various paradigms of time and space outlined above have a profound effect upon how each service views the Air Force.

### **How the Air Force is Viewed by Others**

External influence plays an important role in the low representation of Air Force leaders among GCC commanders. Both historic and political perspectives of the Air Force influence the opinion of sister service members and national leaders. This section examines three categories of perspectives: common perceptions, service-specific views, and national-leader perceptions. These categories flow logically from the different lenses based on how each service's preferred mode of

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<sup>81</sup> Thomas Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, 3rd ed. (Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 1996), 10.

<sup>82</sup> Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, 11.



combat is shaped by time and space. From these paradigms, common and service-specific perceptions of the Air Force have developed. Senior service officers' recommendations, as well as their own experiences in the armed forces, influence national leaders. Therefore, external influences, for both good and bad reasons, influence the decision on who commands a GCC.

### **Common Perceptions**

It is frequently perceived that members of the Air Force lead a safe, relatively easy lifestyle with excellent creature comforts offered on Air Force installations.<sup>83</sup> This perception is grounded in the reality that Airmen generally are based somewhere removed from the battlespace in which they conduct combat operations. It is perhaps also a response to the amount of emphasis the Air Force places on quality of life issues. A second common belief is that Airmen are in less danger than other combatants during war. General Petraeus's joke at the Air Force's expense is an example of this assumption. Furthermore, many believe that the Air Force rests upon a corporate culture more than a military culture. This is due to the less formal officer and enlisted relationships, as well as the close ties the Air Force has traditionally had with large industrial corporations such as Boeing, Lockheed-Martin, and Northrop-Grumman. Proof of this close relationship dates back to the Air Service days, when then Lieutenant Henry "Hap" Arnold realized that the

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<sup>83</sup> These perceptions were manifest in the author's personal experience in numerous joint deployments to Afghanistan, the Horn of Africa, Iraq, and other locations around the globe. Additionally, these perspectives were stated by Army officers on a daily basis to the author during his year as a student at the U.S. Army Command and General Staff School, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. Furthermore, in a personal blog hosted by John Nagl's Center for a New American Security fellow, Tom Ricks, contributors provided their insight into the perceptions of the Air Force that mirror those presented here. Tom Ricks, "The Air Force as a Military Service: A Colonel Responds," *Foreign Policy Magazine*, [http://ricks.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2009/11/09/the\\_air\\_force\\_as\\_a\\_military\\_service\\_a\\_colonel\\_responds](http://ricks.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2009/11/09/the_air_force_as_a_military_service_a_colonel_responds), (accessed 21 March 2011).

development of military aviation was largely dependent upon development of an air-oriented industrial infrastructure.<sup>84</sup>

At the same time, there seems to be a consensus that the Air Force is the world's premier Air Force, that it should remain so, and that Air Force members are professional and technically competent. Many ground warriors often remark about the fact that American surface forces have not had to fear enemy aircraft since the Korean War due to the excellent job the Air Force has done attaining and maintaining air superiority. Similarly, there is an agreement that the Air Force is sharing the burden in the current counterinsurgencies through emergency Close Air Support (CAS), convoy operations, critical airlift including vital medevac missions, and a host of other missions essential to the joint effort in Iraq and Afghanistan. Apart from these common perceptions, each service has its own unique viewpoint of the Air Force.

### **The Army's Perceptions**

Deriving from their particular paradigm of ground warfare, the Army has very distinctive opinions about the Air Force. One view is that the Air Force has little desire to accomplish CAS missions and would rather conduct precision-bombing missions.<sup>85</sup> This stems from the common complaint that when CAS is needed, it takes too long for the bombs to arrive.<sup>86</sup> Another criticism is the inflexibility of the Air Tasking Order (ATO) cycle. The ATO cycle is a 72-hour process by which sorties are allocated among various commands and apportioned among various missions according to the JFC's guidance. Some ground commanders

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<sup>84</sup> For the full scope of Arnold's and subsequently the Air Force's intimacy with industry, see Dik A. Daso, *Hap Arnold and the Evolution of American Airpower*, Smithsonian History of Aviation Series. (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 2000), 61-66, 72-74, 121-34.

<sup>85</sup> U.S. Army (Ret) Brigadier General David L. Grange, "Sergeant Grunt Needs Cas," <http://www.combatreform.org/aircommandos.htm>, (accessed 6 April 2011). Other posts on this forum confirm the Army's belief that CAS is not a priority mission for the Air Force such as Bill Schwartz's remarks at the 2002 Ranger Banquet.

<sup>86</sup> Robert H. McElroy, "Afghanistan: Fire Support for Operation Anaconda," *Field Artillery Journal* 4, no. Sept/Oct (2002): 8.

protest that they cannot determine what types of sorties they will require in the next 24 hours, much less 72 hours. Another grievance comes from early airpower zealot claims that airpower could single handedly win wars. Most notable was the Italian theorist Giulio Douhet who claimed, "To have command of the air is to have victory."<sup>87</sup> His foundational theory for airpower employment greatly influenced the development of Air War Plans Division 1 (AWPD-1), which was the U.S. Army Air Force's war plan for Europe in 1941. While this document presupposed the Air Force would support an eventual ground invasion, it did not rule out victory from the air.<sup>88</sup> These overpromises of airpower have led many in the Army to believe even more firmly that one must have "boots on the ground" to accomplish national objectives, whatever they are, and the Air Force is always trying to hinder accomplishing the nation's real ends.<sup>89</sup> The Army also complains that the Air Force is not responsive to the ground commander's needs. This is similar to the ATO complaint, but is currently directed against actions the Air Force has taken to acquire tasking control over the Army's new UAVs.<sup>90</sup> The Army now has medium-altitude UAVs, and the Air Force attempted unsuccessfully to gain the authority to control these assets according to the JFC's priorities. However, the Army stood firm in its insistence that these assets belonged solely to the brigade commanders.

Despite these distinct reservations, the Army's perception of the Air Force is not entirely critical. Army Special Operations Forces (SOF)

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<sup>87</sup> Giulio Douhet et al., *The Command of the Air* (Tuscaloosa, AL: University of Alabama Press, 1998), 25.

<sup>88</sup> Tami Davis Biddle, *Rhetoric and Reality in Air Warfare : The Evolution of British and American Ideas About Strategic Bombing, 1914-1945*, Princeton Studies in International History and Politics (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2002), 206.

<sup>89</sup> Reese, "Precision Firepower: Smart Bombs, Dumb Strategy," 50.

<sup>90</sup> Stew Magnuson, "Army to Air Force: We Won't Give up Our Surveillance Aircraft," *National Defense Magazine* (February 2010), <http://www.nationaldefensemagazine.org/archive/2010/February/Pages/ArmytoAirForceWeWon'tGiveUpOurSurveillanceAircraft.aspx>, (accessed 21 March 2011).

praise the Air Force's ability to provide support in a timely manner during missions deep behind enemy lines.<sup>91</sup> Although not always perfectly executed, the melding of Air Force and SOF brought significant success in Afghanistan and Iraq.<sup>92</sup>

### **The Navy's Perceptions**

Certain Navy grievances with the Air Force are rooted much more in the early years of airpower and the Air Force's formation as an independent service than in recent events. The original rift began in the 1920's when Brigadier General William "Billy" Mitchell's *Winged Defense* first explained in great detail how to sink a battleship.<sup>93</sup> Mitchell convinced Congress and the Navy to allow him to test his hypotheses against actual warships including the "unsinkable" *SMS Ostfriesland* (Figure 2).<sup>94</sup>



Figure 2. *SMS Ostfriesland* being bombed by Mitchell's aircrew.  
Source: Air Force Historical Research Agency

Following this and another series of tests, Mitchell developed his

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<sup>91</sup> Mike Findlay, Robert Green, and Eric Braganca, "Sof on the Contemporary Battlefield," *Military Review* 83, no. 3 (2003): 8.

<sup>92</sup> Christian M. Karsner, "The Integration of Special Forces into U.S. Air Force Counterland Operations," *Special Warfare* 16, no. 1 (2003): 5.

<sup>93</sup> Mitchell, *Winged Defense : The Development and Possibilities of Modern Air Power--Economic and Military*, 39-41.

<sup>94</sup> ———, *Winged Defense : The Development and Possibilities of Modern Air Power--Economic and Military*, 42.

own idea of how best to defend the United States from foreign attack. In short, Mitchell argued that air power offered the best defense for the coasts and maritime interests of the United States, believing that the Navy was obsolete except for its submarines.<sup>95</sup> Afterward, throughout World War II, the two-front war threatening freedom overshadowed this rivalry. Therefore, cooperation between the Army Air Forces and the Navy, exemplified by the famed Doolittle Raid, was more the norm than not.



Figure 3. Lt Col James “Jimmy” Doolittle departs the *USS Hornet*  
Source: Air Force Historical Research Agency

The mutual feelings of brotherhood soon vanished in the massive force drawdown following World War II when the services were vying for limited budgets and the new atomic mission. In the early years of atomic weapons, the long-range heavy bomber was the only system capable of delivering those weapons. In 1946, the Air Force requested funds and priority for the B-36 bomber.<sup>96</sup> The Navy’s counter was a super-carrier known as the *USS United States* that could launch and recover aircraft

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<sup>95</sup> ———, *Winged Defense : The Development and Possibilities of Modern Air Power-- Economic and Military*, 100-02.

<sup>96</sup> Jeffrey G. Barlow, *Revolt of the Admirals : The Fight for Naval Aviation, 1945-1950* (Washington, DC: Ross & Perry, Inc., 2001), 105.

with the required range and payload to deliver atomic weapons against the Soviet Union.<sup>97</sup> The fight for the deep-atomic-attack mission, and its funding, was eventually won by the Air Force.<sup>98</sup> Through Korea, Vietnam, and the years leading up to Desert Storm, there were squabbles over command and control of air assets and funding requests. These intramural contests were somewhat mitigated in the 1980's by the large defense expenditures of the Reagan administration, but an unease among Navy officers toward the Air Force officers had surely taken deep root in the sea service.

During and after Desert Storm, the Navy's view of the Air Force became more positive, creating a strong relationship between the two services. The Navy found itself in an unfamiliar type of overland conflict where its service specific weapons such as the F-14 and AIM-54 Phoenix team could not engage effectively in close air-to-air battles, nor could it operate within the Air Force's command and control systems. This complication made operations and integration difficult.<sup>99</sup> In the aftermath of Desert Storm, the Navy rapidly made equipment and doctrinal changes to match those previously made by the Air Force.<sup>100</sup> Then, as Benjamin Lambeth notes, nothing brought the two services together in the 1990's like the ten-year experience of Operations Northern and Southern Watch.<sup>101</sup>

Following the trend of increasing cooperation and interoperability, Operations Enduring and Iraqi Freedom further bound the two services. Vice Admiral John Mazach stated, "Rather than pitting one variant of airpower against the other...Enduring Freedom convincingly demonstrated that such 20th century interservice rivalries have no place

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<sup>97</sup> Barlow, *Revolt of the Admirals : The Fight for Naval Aviation, 1945-1950*, 131.

<sup>98</sup> ———, *Revolt of the Admirals : The Fight for Naval Aviation, 1945-1950*, 245.

<sup>99</sup> Benjamin S. Lambeth, "Aerial Partners in Arms," *JFQ: Joint Force Quarterly*, no. 49 (2008): 55.

<sup>100</sup> Lambeth, "Aerial Partners in Arms," 55.

<sup>101</sup> ———, "Aerial Partners in Arms," 56.

in the 21st century U.S. warfighting establishment. The operation was remarkable for its degree of seamless interoperability between U.S. Air Force and the Navy-Marine Corps team's sea based aviation...In short, aircraft carriers and bombers should not be viewed as competitors for resources, but as partners able to leverage unique synergies on the modern battlefield."<sup>102</sup>

Today, Navy and Air Force ties are becoming even closer with the development of the AirSea Battle construct. This construct considers ways the two services can cooperate effectively during combat operations.<sup>103</sup> The AirSea Battle method ensures Navy and Air Force operations work in harmony.<sup>104</sup> Adoption of a permanent AirSea Battle construct could include anything from tactics, techniques, and procedures in some cases, to concepts of operations in others, to higher-level acquisition strategies.<sup>105</sup> This initiative suggests a high level of inter-service cooperation. However, Admiral Robert F. Willard, the PACOM Commander, holds some reservations concerning ground force considerations under this construct, which indicates that not all in the Navy are fully acquiescent with this new doctrine.<sup>106</sup>

### **The Marine Corps' Perceptions**

The Marine Corps' negative views of the Air Force mainly focus on the Air Force's attempts to employ Marine air assets from the Marine Air Ground Task Force (MAGTF) in the JFACC's air campaign. The Marine Corps doctrine and mission of opposed amphibious landing precludes

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<sup>102</sup> John Mazach, "The 21st-Century Triad," *Sea Power* 45, no. 3 (2002): 53.

<sup>103</sup> Marcus Weisgerber, "USAF, Navy Share Details of 'Most Secret Programs' During Airsea Battle," *Inside the Navy* 23, no. 44 (2010): 1.

<sup>104</sup> Andrew Burt, "Final AirSea Study Being Briefed to Mabus and Donley This Month," *Inside the Navy* 24, no. 1 (2011): 1.

<sup>105</sup> Weisgerber, "USAF, Navy Share Details of 'Most Secret Programs' During Airsea Battle," 1.

<sup>106</sup> Richard Halloran, "AirSea Battle," *Air Force Magazine* 93, no. 8 (2010): 47. The overall cooperation between Air Force and Navy concerning AirSea Battle is amicable. However, there have been disagreements over priority of missions as well as command and control, as noted, when executing this doctrine. These differences are normal when developing any joint or interagency operating concept.

the use of organic heavy artillery; therefore, airpower has taken the place of large-caliber artillery. This was first codified in 1935 with the publication of *Tentative Landing Operations*, and further solidified in 1939 when the General Board of the Navy declared, "Marine Aviation is to be equipped, organized, and trained primarily for the support of the Fleet Marine Force in landing operations and in support of troop activities in the field; and secondarily as replacements for carrier-based aircraft."<sup>107</sup> Since at least the Solomon Islands campaign in World War II, the Marine Corps has insisted that a Marine will have firepower when he needs it. From Korea to Desert Storm, Marines have been quite wary of the Air Force's attempts to control their air arm. In fact, Major General Royal Moore admitted to "gaming the ATO process" and then withdrew all his Marine fixed wing aviation from the JFACC's span of control.<sup>108</sup> However, these issues have not stopped recent efforts to increase interoperability between the two services

In 2009, Marine Corps and Air Force senior leaders began a series of conferences dubbed the Marine Corps-Air Force Warfighter Talks to resolve key warfighting differences.<sup>109</sup> These talks have focused mainly on command and control issues and how to best integrate the MAGTF air component into the air campaign without sacrificing the doctrinal touchstones of Marine Corps aviation.<sup>110</sup>

Additionally, there is some concern that under the AirSea Battle construct described above, the Air Force focuses too much on air superiority and, in doing so, would threaten the Naval and Marine forces

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<sup>107</sup> United States Marine Corps, *MCWP 3-23 Offensive Air Support* (Quantico, VA: United States Marine Corps, 2001), 1-1. Edwin H. Simmons, *The United States Marines : A History*, 3rd ed. (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 1998), 122.

<sup>108</sup> Major General Royal N. Moore Jr., "Marine Air: There When Needed," in *Naval Institute Proceedings* (United States Navy, 1991), 63-70.

<sup>109</sup> Daniel J. Darnell and George J. Trautman III, "Shoulder to Shoulder: The Marine Corps and Air Force in Combat," *Joint Force Quarterly*, no. 52 (2009): 125.

<sup>110</sup> ———, "Shoulder to Shoulder: The Marine Corps and Air Force in Combat," 126.



operating on the surface.<sup>111</sup> Furthermore, Marines feel left out of the AirSea Battle construct and view it as ignoring the over 200-year tradition of the Navy-Marine team.<sup>112</sup> The Navy and Marine Corps, which have the greatest historical and doctrinal angst about the Air Force and its vision of how best to apply airpower, are now developing closer relationships due to the expeditionary nature of their service cultures, But both are still experiencing some growing pains of a more cooperative relationship.

### **National Leaders' Perceptions**

Decisions about policy, budgets, and commitments to military action originate with national leaders. Their perceptions of the Air Force's capabilities play a fundamental role in the selection of GCC commanders. Regrettably, several instances of poor acquisition practices and mismanagement of nuclear weapons have damaged the Air Force's credibility in the eyes of national leaders. The Air Force has also been perceived as being parochial and not interested in the current conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan, preferring to prepare for a future near-peer conflict. However, a recent uptick in professionalism in the highest ranks of the Air Force is tempering these negative perceptions.

In October 2004, the Principal Deputy Undersecretary of the Air Force for Acquisition, Darleen Druyun, was convicted of negotiating contracts worth billions of dollars and favoring Boeing while conducting job negotiations with the same company.<sup>113</sup> As a result, the acquisitions for major Air Force projects were handed over from the Air Force to the Office of the Secretary of Defense.<sup>114</sup> This move indicated a dramatic loss

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<sup>111</sup> Colonel Philip Riddehof (USMC), "Air-Sea Battle," United States Navy, [http://osiris.usnwc.edu/pipermail/nwc\\_onlinediscussion/2010-August/000320.html](http://osiris.usnwc.edu/pipermail/nwc_onlinediscussion/2010-August/000320.html), (accessed 6 April 2011).

<sup>112</sup> ———, "Air-Sea Battle," (accessed 6 April 2011).

<sup>113</sup> George Cahlink, "Ex-Pentagon Procurement Executive Gets Jail Time," *Government Executive.com* (2004), <http://www.govexec.com/dailyfed/1004/100104g1.htm>, (accessed 24 March 2011).

<sup>114</sup> Ehrhard, "Strategy for the Long Haul," 28.

of confidence in the Air Force's ability to follow ethical practices in the acquisitions field. During the same period, Air Force General Gregory Martin was nominated to become the first non-Navy commander of PACOM. However, as part of the results from the Congressional investigation into the Druyun-Boeing relationship, Senator John McCain, a retired Navy Captain, questioned General Martin's fitness for the post because of his possible involvement in some of the Boeing contracts.<sup>115</sup> As a result, General Martin withdrew his nomination, despite being found to have had no involvement in the Boeing contract, and yet another admiral took up residence as the PACOM commander.<sup>116</sup>

As the service in charge of two-thirds of the nation's nuclear triad, the Air Force should be the standard-setter of the nuclear enterprise. However, in 2007, munitions personnel at Minot Air Force Base, North Dakota, inadvertently loaded live nuclear weapons on a B-52 that flew to Barksdale Air Force Base, Louisiana and was unguarded for several hours before the mistake was discovered.<sup>117</sup> This incident showed multiple levels of lack of supervision and complacency in the handling of nuclear munitions. Furthermore, in March 2008, a critical fuse component for nuclear devices was mistakenly shipped to Taiwan.<sup>118</sup> These two incidents sparked an investigation by Secretary of Defense Gates that ultimately determined there had been an erosion of nuclear security standards within the Air Force.<sup>119</sup>

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<sup>115</sup> Gregg K. Kakesako, "General Pulls Plug on Camp Smith Job," *Honolulu Star*, 7 October 2004.

<sup>116</sup> Brewer, "The Case for Service Leadership Diversity in the Geographic Combatant Commands", 51.

<sup>117</sup> Ehrhard, "Strategy for the Long Haul," 17.

<sup>118</sup> ———, "Strategy for the Long Haul," 17.

<sup>119</sup> Staff Report, "Moseley and Wynne Forced Out," *Air Force Times* (2008), [http://www.airforcetimes.com/news/2008/06/airforce\\_moseleywynne\\_060508w/](http://www.airforcetimes.com/news/2008/06/airforce_moseleywynne_060508w/), (accessed 25 March 2011).

In 2008, Secretary Gates also accused the Air Force and the other services of “next-war-itis.”<sup>120</sup> This comment was specifically aimed at the Air Force’s insistence on the need for more F-22 Raptors.<sup>121</sup> This perceived desire for more and better aircraft, particularly air-superiority aircraft, has led to criticism that the Air Force should focus more on the current wars and focus less on futuristic programs. Further complications arose with the 2008 launch of the recruiting campaign, “Above All.”<sup>122</sup> The problem with this campaign started when several Congressmen opined that the advertisements seemed more like a request for Congressional funding than a recruiting campaign.<sup>123</sup> Representatives John Murtha, Allen Boyd, and Jerry Lewis all made public statements and questioned the Secretary of Defense on the purpose and legality of this advertising campaign.<sup>124</sup> The pursuit of newer “toys” and the funds to go along with them left many Washington lawmakers skeptical of the Air Force’s motives. Did Air Force leaders want to win in Iraq and Afghanistan, asked some national leaders, or perpetuate the never-ending cycle of the industrial military complex? These events culminated in the dismissal of the Secretary of the Air Force, Michael Wynne, and CSAF, General T. Michael Moseley, in 2008.<sup>125</sup> Their replacements were Michael Donley and General Norton Schwartz.

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<sup>120</sup> August Cole and Yochi J. Dreazen, "Boots on the Ground or Weapons in the Sky," *Wall Street Journal* (30 October 2008), <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB122531935101081929.html>, (accessed 24 March 2011).

<sup>121</sup> ———, "Boots on the Ground or Weapons in the Sky," (accessed

<sup>122</sup> Julian E. Barnes and Peter Spiegel, "Air Force Ads' Intent Questioned," *Los Angeles Times* (30 March 2008), <http://articles.latimes.com/2008/mar/30/nation/na-airforce30>, (accessed 24 March 2011).

<sup>123</sup> ———, "Air Force Ads' Intent Questioned," (accessed 24 March 2011).

<sup>124</sup> ———, "Air Force Ads' Intent Questioned," (accessed 24 March 2011).

<sup>125</sup> Brian Ross Jonathan Karl, and Len Tepper, "Top Air Force Officials Fired," *ABC News: The Blotter* (2008), <http://abcnews.go.com/Blotter/story?id=5006916&page=1>, (accessed 4 May 2011).

During the 17 March 2011 Senate Armed Services Committee (SASC) hearing on the Air Force Posture, the tone of the Senators present was more positive. Senator Carl Levin, SASC Chairman, noted, “after a significant number of failures a few years ago, the Air Force has refocused on managing nuclear forces.”<sup>126</sup> Along the same lines, Senator Daniel Akaka stated, “Under your [General Norton Schwartz and Secretary of the Air Force Michael Donley] leadership, the Air Force has secured the nation's nuclear arsenal and restored public confidence.”<sup>127</sup> Additionally, Senator Kelly Ayotte stated, “The fact that [European Aerospace Defense Systems] has decided not to contest your decision I think is a testament to the quality of the process that you followed during this bidding round.”<sup>128</sup> This statement was in reference to the KC-X acquisitions process, of which the infamous Drury-Boeing scandal was an impetus to begin the bargaining process again. These comments demonstrate a return of confidence in the Air Force by senior political figures.

National leader confidence in the Air Force’s ability to command was shaken by events during the first decade of the 21st century. However, under the direction of Secretary Donley and General Schwartz, the Air Force has shown itself to be committed to the current wars and resolute about the proper handling of national treasure.

Yet concerns linger. Secretary Gates stated in a speech to cadets at the United States Air Force Academy, “I’m concerned that the view still lingers in some corners that once I depart as Secretary...things can get back to what some consider the be real Air Force normal.”<sup>129</sup> This

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<sup>126</sup> Senate Armed Services, *Senate Armed Services Committee Holds Hearing on the Proposed Fiscal 2012 and Future Year Defense Authorization Budget Request Related to the Air Force* 17 March 2011 2011, 2.

<sup>127</sup> *Senate, 2012 Air Force Posture*, 24.

<sup>128</sup> *Senate, 2012 Air Force Posture*, 27.

<sup>129</sup> Robert M. Gates, "Speech to the Cadets at the United States Air Force Academy," <http://www.defense.gov/speeches/speech.aspx?speechid=1543>, (accessed 4 April 2011).

statement implies he still holds some reservations that the Air Force may revert to the practices of “next war-itis.”

### **Summary**

How the Air Force is viewed by the other services and by national leaders may correlate closely with the low selection rate of Air Force leaders acting as GCCs. Each service has a distinct history that shapes its collective views of time and battle space. These experiences and views of time and space create paradigms that shape how members from each service view the world and those in it.

Through these lenses, the other services have developed particular perceptions of the Air Force. When assessing these views, the positive outweighs the negative. The common belief that the Air Force is “softer” due to more focus on quality of life issues is counterbalanced by grateful ground forces that rely on the umbrella of coverage the Air Force provides during combat operations. The historical enmities between the Navy and Air Force, which began after World War I, are subsiding. The AirSea battle construct is working to ensure close cooperation and partnership between these services, hopefully for decades to come. Due to poor management in a several responsibilities of the Air Force, national leaders have had, at times, a low perception of the Air Force as a whole. This relationship has improved thanks to the leadership provided by Secretary Donley and General Schwartz. Restored focus on ethical acquisitions practices, nuclear enterprise, and contributions to the current wars has increased the Air Force’s standing in the eyes of those leaders. However, there is an undertone of doubt that the Air Force is truly interested in maintaining its current focus on joint interoperability and abandoning next war-it is. External views of the Air Force, positive and negative, no doubt have, and will continue to influence whether or not an Airman is selected to command a GCC.

## Chapter 4

### Synthesis

*Mere change is not growth. Growth is the synthesis of change and continuity, and where there is no continuity, there is no growth.*

C.S. Lewis

The internal and external causes that influence whether or not an Air Force officer is selected to lead a GCC do not act independently. Rather they interact, reinforcing and counter-balancing each other to influence an Air Force officer's suitability, perceived and real, for GCC leadership. Therefore, this chapter will examine the internal causes, the external causes and how the two interact. The complexity of interacting perceptions, and how they influence the selection for GCC commanders, becomes clear in this synthesis.

#### **Internal Causes**

Four factors internal to the Air Force aid in attainment of GCC positions: the core values, the Airman's creed, an expeditionary mentality, and air-mindedness. The core values set a moral framework from which Air Force leaders can guide their decisions, both personally and professionally. Therefore, leaders who live by the core values should make sound moral decisions in whatever position they hold, including GCC commander. The Airman's creed reinforces the warrior ethos and ensures Airmen are aware of the proud heritage of the Air Force and the American armed forces. This warrior mentality and appreciation for history guarantees Air Force officers keep faith with comrades in arms and fosters aggressive and bold action when needed. The presence of an expeditionary mentality further instills the warrior ethos, as every Airman knows he is expected to deploy to combat. Finally, air-mindedness makes Air Force candidates for GCC appealing.

Officers possessing this quality see the world on a grand scale, which significantly aids strategic thinking. These internal qualities should help Air Force officers compete well for GCC command.

However, a greater number of internal qualities hinder, rather than aid, Air Force officers in the quest for a GCC. Foundational doctrine statements imply Air Force military superiority due to airpower's ability to span battlespace, and provide numerous options to national leaders. The love of technology and subsequent thirst for technologically competent people make Airmen appear to prefer specialization and sophisticated weapons systems. This technical specialization may be one reason Airmen have been overrepresented in FCC commands. The concept of air-mindedness, while at times helpful, can also be a hindrance in the GCC selection process. Air-mindedness can be seen as limiting Airmen's thoughts to exclusive use of airpower in conflict resolution. Similarly, the primacy of the pilot limits GCC selection because it carries with it the possibility of narrowness of vision due to common beliefs held by an elite few within the Air Force.

The Air Force's structure also hinders attainment of GCC command. It does not gradually develop combat leaders, based on the doctrinal tenet of centralized control of airpower. Likewise, the desire for establishment of the JFACC assumed the JFC would *not* be an Airman and would therefore need air expertise to aid in command decisions. This assumption implicitly stated to the DoD that Airmen are more concerned with the employment of airpower than with the employment of joint forces.

Positive traits internal to the Air Force are powerful, and the majority stem from the declared values. In contrast, the majority of negative characteristics stem from the service's operative values. It is a common characteristic of human nature for people to judge others by what they actually value rather than what they say they value. Thus, the

Air Force's operative values tend to overshadow its declared values, in diminishing the opportunities for senior officers to become GCCs.

### **External Causes**

The selection of a GCC commander is complex, and multiple factors affect the outcome. The perceptions of sister services and national leaders also influence the decision making process.

Positive external perceptions of the Air Force fall into two general themes: integration and change for the better. The integration of precision airpower with special operations forces is one example of a positive external perception. This demonstrates that the Air Force, through air power's flexibility, can adapt to unplanned situations such as those conducted when SOF operate with local forces without the designation of a fire support coordination line, as happened in Afghanistan in 2001. This approach to warfare has been labeled the Afghan Model, or a new way of war.<sup>1</sup> Although some have argued that this way of war can only work in exactly the same conditions as Afghanistan, Richard Andres effectively argues that this model can apply to small- and medium-sized enemies with equally successful results.<sup>2</sup>

Integration efforts with the Navy have also improved the chances of Air Force selection for GCC. During Desert Storm, the Navy realized it needed to be better prepared to operate effectively and efficiently with the Air Force if it was to have a role in joint, overland combat operations. The Navy made great strides in converting equipment and procedures common between both services towards that goal. After Desert Storm, the Navy and Air Force cultures began to converge when the Air Force adopted an expeditionary mindset. This mindset grew from the establishment of no-fly zones over Iraq from 1991 to 2003. With the

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<sup>1</sup> Biddle and Army War College (U.S.). Strategic Studies Institute., *Afghanistan and the Future of Warfare : Implications for Army and Defense Policy*, iv.

<sup>2</sup> Richard B. Andres, Craig Wills, and Thomas E. Griffith, "Winning with Allies: The Strategic Value of the Afghan Model," *International Security* 30, no. 3 (2006): 127.



advent of the AirSea Battle construct, Air Force and Navy cooperation continues to grow to new levels. This integration demonstrates that the Air Force is willing to compromise and cooperate in the interest of national security. Similarly, the cooperation between the Air Force and Marine Corps demonstrates the Air Force's positive influence and willingness to compromise and learn from the best practices of its sister services. These integration efforts testify to the Air Force's desire to be a "team player."

The Air Force has worked to change its perception with national leaders, resulting in tangible evidence of improved leadership within the Air Force. National leaders lost confidence in Air Force leaders in the early 2000s due to a repeated lack of transparency. First revealed in the aftermath of the Druyun fiasco and later solidified with mistakes made with nuclear weapons, this streak of irresponsibility led to the firing of the Secretary of the Air Force and the CSAF. The Air Force has since made positive strides to correct leadership deficiencies and repair the damage done by these events. This positive movement has increased the confidence of national leaders that ultimately decide who will be granted a GCC.

The negative factors that influence the relative lack of Air Force GCCs can be divided into two categories: talking past each other, and not participating as a team player. These categories stem from commonly held perceptions, sister service perceptions, and national leader perceptions. Additionally, they influence each other to form negative views of the Air Force and its institutional leaders that hinder GCC selection of Air Force officers.

Quarrels occur and persist when people talk past each other. Both parties may have valid points, but preconceived notions preclude the ability of one party to hear or accept the points being made by the other.

This describes the first set of negative influences. These influences are history, spatial views, air-mindedness, corporate culture, and, ironically, the desire for the U.S. Air Force to remain the world's premier air fighting power. Airpower has only been in existence since the late 19th century. As with any new technology, there have been numerous theories on airpower's proper use. However, there has been only one conflict in which airpower theory was tested in a relatively pure form: World War II. Even in that conflict, combatants restrained themselves from pure air power theoretical ideas such as the use of poisonous gas bombs. As earlier argued, airpower did not deliver on all its promises during that conflict, but it did prove essential. Land and sea power service members view airpower enthusiasts much as older siblings view their younger siblings. They notice mistakes and chuckle or even laugh out loud at his "foolishness." The older siblings believe they are right and that they can bring the young one back into line when needed. The danger is that sometimes the younger sibling's ideas are valid, yet the elders pay no attention.

Another arena in which land and sea advocates have difficulty understanding airpower is in their view of spatial relations. Land-power advocates cannot separate themselves from terra firma. Doing so could prove fatal. Likewise, naval operators have difficulty separating themselves from the open oceans and littoral regions. When discussing tactical, operational, and strategic issues, service members tend to draw upon their own experiences. Therefore, Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, and Marines view the battlespace differently. In turn, they have difficulty listening to each other's points of view. This differing view in spatial relations, coupled with the older sibling syndrome, further reduces sister services' belief in the competence of Airmen to serve in GCC positions.

The perception of the Air Force holding a corporate culture rather than a military culture also hinders Air Force officers in the attainment of GCC positions. A GCC must effectively lead America's fighting men

and women into battle, whereas the Chief Executive Officer of a corporation is expected to run the company well and earn profits for shareholders. These tasks represent disparate mindsets. It is true that both military and business leaders must be innovative, bold, and willing to take risks. However, in the martial arts, people and nations are at stake. Who is best suited to win a war: Bill Gates or Dwight Eisenhower? Most would agree that Mr. Gates is an esteemed businessman but lacks the skills needed to defeat a violent enemy. Adding to the corporate perception of Air Force culture is the high priority the Air Force places on quality of life. Some feel that one who has not gone through hell cannot command those who must.

The external perception that the Air Force is, and should remain, the world's premier Air Force is positive; however, it has negative consequences toward the selection of Airmen for GCC positions. Airmen are viewed as specialists and are seen as being very adept at learning intricate details of specific missions or facets, thus becoming undisputed experts in their fields. The drawback to this level of expertise is that specialists often have difficulty performing jobs that necessitate generalist skills, such as the GCC position requires.

Further hindering Air Force officers from selection for GCC positions, the Air Force has left a residue in the psyche of sister services and national leaders of not being a team player. The historical reluctance to perform CAS and the perceived inflexibility of the ATO process give the perception that the Air Force is not responsive to ground commanders' needs. Additionally, the historical perception that the Air Force tried to appropriate sister-service organic airpower assets for Air Force plans, thus robbing Soldiers; Sailors; and, most pointedly, Marines from vital air cover, erodes the credibility of the Air Force's desire to fight jointly. When these perceptions are combined with the rhetoric of Guilio Douhet, Billy Mitchell, AWPD-1, and other airpower advocates, one can

see how the elder brothers, wielders of land, naval, and amphibious power, smile condescendingly at airpower leaders.

More recently and most damaging is the loss of confidence in Air Force leaders by national leaders. Air Force officers have been seen as poor stewards of national treasure, conducting dubious efforts to gain funding, and focusing too much on the next war at the expense of the current fight. Additionally, the current Secretary of Defense harbors doubts concerning the sincerity of the Air Force in its commitment to the current war versus vying for relevance in an uncertain future conflict. Although partially reversed by the leadership of Secretary Donley and General Schwartz, this chink in the Air Force's reputation as a strategic joint force degraded national leaders' willingness to select an Air Force officer as a GCC.

### **Interaction of Internal and External Causes**

Positive influences from the internal and external causes reinforce one another, while the negative internal aspects exacerbate the negative external aspects. Furthermore, the total influence of positive internal and external portions have varying degrees of effect on the total negative portions. The sum of these interactions affects Air Force officer selection for GCC command.

Of the identified positive internal causes, the Core Values influence the external perspective that the Air Force is making changes for the better. The Core Values are a moral guide for Air Force members. National leaders, who lost confidence in Air Force *Integrity* (Druryun case), *Excellence* (nuclear enterprise), and *Service* (lobbying Congress), now see the Air Force regaining some of that ground through recent actions with the KC-X program, reinvigorated nuclear enterprise actions, and scaled back advertising campaigns.

The remaining positive internal causes influence the external group known as integration initiatives. The Airman's Creed espouses the warrior ethos, which aids in countering the common negative perceptions

of the Air Force as a corporate culture. Similarly, the expeditionary mentality of the Air Force aligns its members more with the Navy and Marine Corps and was an important catalyst in the initiation of AirSea Battle and the Warrior Conferences. Additionally, Air Force doctrinal statements espouse the importance of teamwork and joint employment of military forces. These influences on the external positive factors are a signal to outsiders that the Air Force is moving toward more of a martial service ready to integrate whole heartedly to the joint fight.

Of the negative internal factors, three influence the Air Force and sister services talking past each other, and three influence the perception that the Air Force is not a team player.

Air-mindedness, a love of technology, and the structure of the Air Force create a culture and a lexicon that make it difficult for Air Force officers to speak effectively with the other services. Air-mindedness influences how the Air Force views the world and how Air Force members solve operational and strategic problems. Similarly, the love for technology often leads Air Force members to formulate solutions using engineering methodologies, as well as search for a technological solution to problems, rather than looking for low technology and less efficient, but possibly more effective solutions. Also, Air Force structure does not facilitate officers learning the burdens of command at a young age. Therefore, Air Force officers have trouble relating to sister service officers, such as a Marine company commander. The combination of this culture and lexicon can lead to confusion in joint discussions concerning problems and solutions.

Perhaps the most damaging of the two themes from the external causes is the perception that the Air Force is not a team player. The internal causes that influence this perception are doctrine, primacy of the pilot, and allure of the JFACC. Several doctrinal statements emphasize how the Air Force is more well suited for achieving national objectives than the other services. Additionally, doctrine states that air

power gives national leaders more options than land or naval power.<sup>3</sup> Such statements cause resentment among the other services. The primacy of the pilot contributes to a negative view because the Air Force overly emphasizes the importance of such a small portion of the total force. Many career fields, not just those of pilot and aircrew, breed competent leaders who understand airpower and its employment. Therefore, a service that is only led by a small section of its officer corps can be perceived as being concerned with a minority interest rather than achieving the greatest good for the greatest number. Finally, the allure of the JFACC has created the perception that Air Force officers want to become JFACCs, and nothing more. Part of the journey toward incorporation of the JFACC in joint doctrine has included attempts to strip sister services of their organic airpower assets. This practice did not foster close ties and the perception of teamwork required for a joint fight.

### **Synthesis**

To review, there were two general categories of positive influences: integration initiatives and change for the better. Likewise, there are two categories of negative influences: not being a team player, and talking past the other services.

Integration initiatives are in direct conflict with the negative perception that the Air Force is not a team player. The improvements in Navy, Marine Corps, and Army SOF integration efforts with the Air Force would appear to resolve the negative team player perception. However, several of the Air Force's internal factors, the primacy of the pilot, the infatuation with the role of the JFACC, and certain doctrinal statements, suggest that the Air Force may want to be a team player, but only on its own terms. Nevertheless, Secretary Gate's concerns may not be limited to him alone. Thus, only time will tell whether the Air Force is genuinely

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<sup>3</sup> Air Force Doctrine Document 1, *Air Force Basic Doctrine*, ix.

committed to changing, or is merely waiting out the current national leaders.

Integration initiatives are also correcting the issue the Air Force has had in communicating with the sister services. The DoD has emphasized jointness since 1986, but in practice that has proved difficult to accomplish. Since the advent of AirSea Battle, Warfighter talks, and Air Force-SOF integration, the Air Force has had much less trouble working with the other services, and vice versa. Indeed, these integration efforts have produced a better joint lexicon with which the Air Force and other services can now communicate.

The positive category of change for the better does not directly influence either of the negative categories. It does have a major influence on the national leader perceptions of the Air Force. This, combined with the integrations efforts effects, does aid in the decision to select an Air Force officer for GCC leadership.

### **Summary**

The integration efforts and evidence of change for the better within the Air Force are strong positive factors that influence Air Force selection to lead a GCC. However, the negative perception of the Air Force not being a team player outweighs those influences. Human nature does not look kindly upon people who say one thing and do another. Therefore, it will take time to see if the Air Force is truly interested in integration efforts or if it will use these efforts as a disguise for the JFACC to garner more control over sister-service air assets. The trend is towards more Airmen being selected for GCC command as evidenced by the fact that four of the five Air Force GCC commanders were selected since 2000. However, the Air Force must do more internally to further shape positive perceptions of those outside the organization.

## Chapter 5

### Conclusions

*Knowing others is intelligence; knowing yourself is true wisdom. Mastering others is strength; mastering yourself is true power.*

Tao Te Ching

National leaders have hesitated to place Airmen in control of a Geographic Combatant Command or Theater Command since before the Air Force became independent in 1947. Even though Airmen have touted themselves as strategic thinkers, they have occasionally been joint thinkers; only five Airmen have held the post of GCC or Theater Commander-in-Chief. Airmen have arguably been overrepresented in Functional Combatant Commands, which demonstrates acknowledgement by national leaders that Airmen can effectively hold specialized national strategic positions. Airpower is vital to the accomplishment of many national objectives, and ignoring the benefits of intimate knowledge of air power is detrimental to achieving that end. Furthermore, lack of Airmen representation in GCC positions carries the risk of inducing stagnation in the problem-solving processes of those GCC staffs.

This thesis has demonstrated that there are both internal and external factors that influence the selection of GCCs. The Air Force's core values, air-mindedness, roles of the individual and leader, its infatuation with the JFACC, and its command structure are the internal causes that help or hinder assignment of Airmen to GCC positions. These internal factors influence external factors. Of the external factors, views of history, how each service views spatial relations, common beliefs, sister-service perceptions, and national leader perceptions combine to shed both positive and negative light on the Air Force. The



positive integration efforts aid the helpful perception of the Air Force because it shows the organization is willing to learn from others. However, the most harmful negative perception is that the Air Force is not a team player. As such, national leaders and sister services may be biased against Airmen when considering who should lead a GCC.

The Air Force should work directly to reinforce those things it can control that enhance the competitiveness of its officers for GCC positions and to attenuate those things that detract from its competitiveness for those positions. This direct work should have positive indirect consequences on the external factors that enhance its competitiveness and attenuate the external factors that detract from competitiveness. In short, the Air Force should tackle the internal factors directly; which should, over time, address the external factors indirectly. The rationale for this approach is that because external actors make the decisions, their perceptions are the ultimate objective; but the Air Force can act directly only on things within its purview. Much like the classic in-direct approach to warfare, this course of action relies on second- and third-order effects to produce lasting results.

### **What the Air Force Must Do Internally and Their Indirect Effects**

The Air Force should not change any of the positive internal factors. The service's Core Values provide a simple, yet complete, moral guide for Air Force members. Ideally, external observers will notice Air Force leaders living by this moral. The nation needs morally sound leaders placed in strategic leadership positions such as GCCs. The Airman's Creed works to instill the warrior spirit and pride in service. The Air Force benefits from this esprit-de-corps as it garners respect from other services and serves as an attraction to new recruits. Next, *certain* Air Force foundational doctrinal statements should not change, specifically those that tout Airpower as different from land and naval power and give national leaders more timely options for applying military force in a crisis. The reason is it is important to acknowledge that the

Air Force is different but not better than the other services. Another constant must be Air-mindedness, a concept that fosters a different perspective of the battlespace and innovative solutions. Air-mindedness and other unique Air Force qualities will help ensure GCC staffs do not become entrenched in one way of doing business. Additionally, the Air Force should maintain its emphasis on quality of life in an effort to attract and retain quality members. Although the indirect effects of this will no doubt continue to be the subject of many jokes, it does not detract from the overall formulation of how well an Air Force officer can lead a GCC.

However, the Air Force should change several internal issues to convince national leaders and other decision makers that Air Force officers are fully capable of directing a GCC. First, the Air Force must change the internal operative value of the primacy of the pilot. As an Air, Space, and Cyberspace force, pilot primacy sends the signal of a force led by an elite minority. This fosters the negative view that the Air Force is a flying club and not a team player. A non-pilot leader will assist in organizational growth by injecting differing ideas and views, much like and Air Force GCC would inject new ideas into the GCC staff. The Air Force must also reevaluate its desire for high-price, high-technology items, keeping in mind that lower-technology options, such as the Light Attack Aircraft (LAA), can be equally effective at certain missions. This will demonstrate that the Air Force is more interested in providing options to leaders, rather than the acquisition of toys. The Air Force must also resolve its command structure. The level of rank to lead an operational squadron should be reduced from lieutenant colonel to major and lieutenant colonels rather than colonels should command operational groups. The benefits of this would improve decision-making at higher grades because officers will have more experience as formal commanders at a younger age. Additionally, officers would have a common ground with their sister service comrades when discussing

professional matters. Finally, and possibly most importantly, the Air Force should relinquish its love affair with a theater-level JFACC, which is arguably the most important doctrinal tenet in today's Air Force. As mentioned earlier, there may be times when a sub-theater JFACC may work best for the context of the war. This will foster amelioration of the negative view that the Air Force is not a team player.

Many of the aforementioned best practices and changes influence, indirectly, the most damaging perception, which is the Air Force is not a team player. If the Air Force continues to make efforts to build habitual relationships with sister-services, opinions should begin to sway toward the acceptance of Air Force officers as GCC commanders among the other services and, as a third-order effect, positively influence national leaders' confidence in Air Force officers' ability to lead a GCC.

### **Summary**

GCCs are important to the formulation and implementation of national military strategy. Commanders of GCCs are responsible for the employment of combat forces and are expected to advise the CJCS, SecDef, Department of State, and President in regional matters across the spectrum. The role of GCC has been intensified since the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001. Having a representative number of Air Force GCC commanders is important to the maturation of the Air Force as a national defense organization. More importantly, Air Force GCC commanders bring unique experience, specialization, and points of view to the joint warfare table.

If the Air Force takes the proper steps to put its own house in order to create a large number of senior Airmen who are genuinely capable of commanding a Geographic Combatant Command, it will gradually but inexorably reinforce the positive external perceptions

and ameliorate the negative external perceptions concerning the ability of its senior leaders to assume these significant positions of command. Both the Air Force and the nation will be better for its having done so.

## **Appendix 1**

### **The Airman's Creed**

I am an American Airman.  
I am a Warrior.  
I have answered my Nation's call.  
I am an American Airman.  
My mission is to Fly, Fight, and Win.  
I am faithful to a Proud Heritage,  
A Tradition of Honor,  
And a Legacy of Valor.  
I am an American Airman.  
Guardian of Freedom and Justice,  
My Nation's Sword and Shield,  
Its Sentry and Avenger.  
I defend my Country with my Life.  
I am an American Airman.  
Wingman, Leader, Warrior.  
I will never leave an Airman behind,  
I will never falter,  
And I will not fail.

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